

THE HERMIT OF CAPRI



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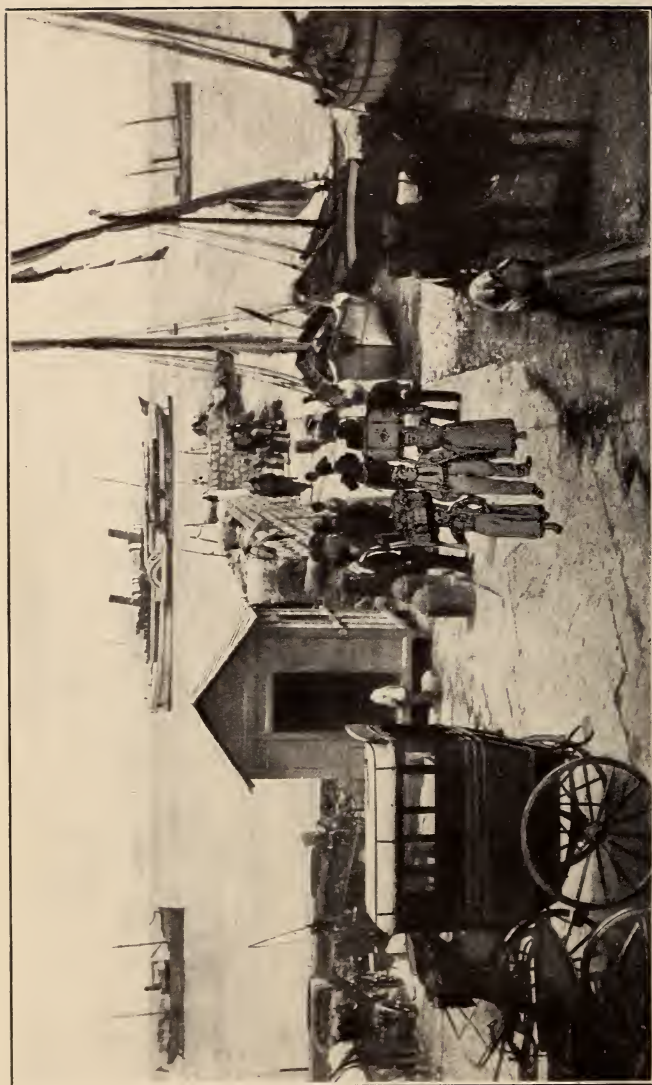
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"WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME"

THE HERMIT OF CAPRI

BY
JOHN STEVENTON *Lawrence*

ILLUSTRATED



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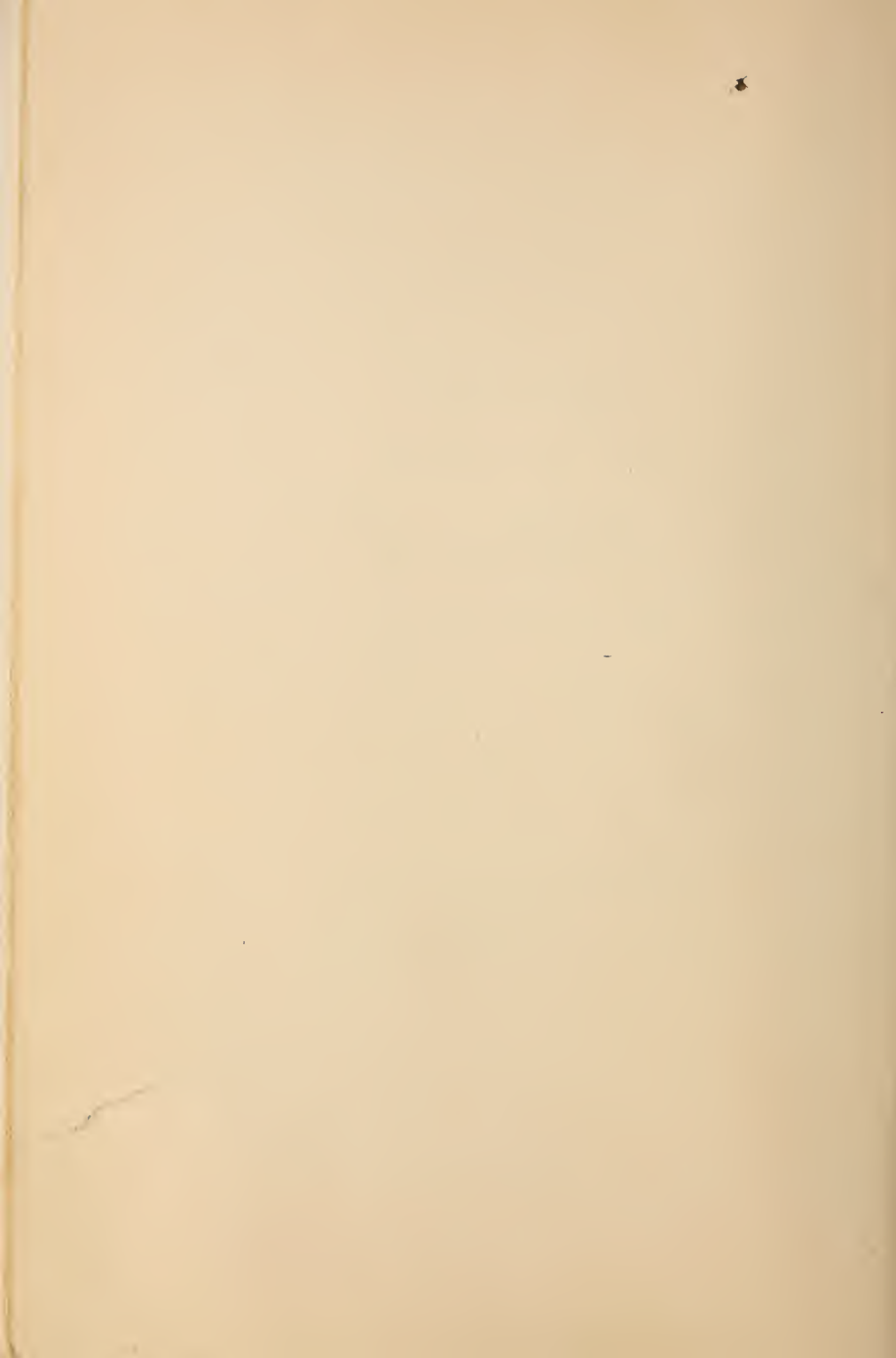
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The Hermit of Capri



The Hermit of Capri

CAPRI, Italy, *October 3, 190-*.
(Sunday night.)

MY DEAR ———:

You may fill the blank. Let me thank you for the kind wishes you were pleased to express for me in your note received on the steamer at sailing. You have been ever good to me, and I left my native land feeling that I had a fellow-traveller, for you said you would "follow" me.

I shall try to keep my promise to write to you, so that you may know that I am "all right." It is needless to tell you of the usuals of the voyage: the ever-widening ocean, the great ship, the passengers of low and high degree, the passing ship on the far

horizon, the tick-tack of the Marconi, the betting on the day's run, the Captain's dinner on the eve of arrival, and the glad steaming into the Bay of Naples. Then Naples, with its rocky, narrow streets; its beautiful, calm, alluring bay; its treasure-house of all sorts of fascinating, creeping things, etc. The "etc." covers a multitude of voices—singing, braying, crowing, bleating voices; and the mournful cry of the brush-and-broom man goes up, the wandering echo of them all—a wailing Jonah.

Standing on the balcony of San Martino, high on the summit of the cliff-brow north, the city below—with its flat roofs and warty chimney-pots, its threads of streets, its swelling domes here and there—curves along the bay shore, on the left to Portici and Vesuvius, on the right to Posilipo, with Castello Dell Ovo in the centre projecting into the bay as the handle of a Cupid's bow.

But I merely disembarked at this former capital of a kingdom on my way to Capri, which lies south across the bay—a great leviathan of stone guarding its entrance and bearing my hopes of rest as well.

“And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits;
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.”

There remains with me the abiding picture of you as, on that warm September afternoon, you turned and walked away so straight and dainty “all in white samite,” your five-foot-five really appearing to grow taller in your departing distance, your wheat-gold hair more golden in the glowing sunset. I had said: “Good-bye. God bless you.” And you: “How shall I know that you are—are all right?” And I, again: “I will write, if you will permit.” You had bowed with a smile of assent in your moist, clear gray eyes. It is to that departing figure, under the rose of that smile and to those honest eyes I write. We had spoken of many things as we walked: of your ambitions in your profession, your love for the children you taught, your misgivings as to your ability to accomplish the good you desired, and, finally, you left me to infer from your exclamation, as we neared the gate of your home, “Oh, I want to be doing something in the world, to take my part!” that

you contemplated the possibility of your abandonment of the work which you had often said you felt to be your "calling," to yield to that universal beckon of Nature to her children; but at whose special behest you left me to imagine. I was not left in doubt that there was some *one*, yet in those maidenly eyes came a forbidding mist as a veil through which I might not intrude. Our parting had come—had it not? And so, I, lonely, among the crowd of passengers on the liner, remembered the vision and our talk of many things, and, oh, I do not like your Mr. Call—or whoever that "some one" is!

But come with me to Capri and forgive in me whatever needs to be forgiven. You never got into a "wobbly-calf" skiff at the Naples landing and were rowed by a barefoot fisherman to the bay steamer, where you mounted the rope-balustered ladder to the deck, and there, while the steamer waited, threw coins to the amphibious divers who, treading water, appealed for "awn franc," and, many francs being thrown edgewise into the blue waves, dove many a fathom deep, brought up the francs, put them in their

mouths until from many divings their cheeks bulged with the enormous quid? No! You have been too busy in your ten years' "calling," and have had no time "to go abroad far countries for to see." Then "follow me, full of glee," across the bay in the warm October morning, the blue waters glistening, the gulls flying, the little band of mandolin, guitar, and triangle musicians on the deck playing *Maria, Mari* and *Addio la Bella Napoli* for your lire, until you pass mandarin-groved Sorrento, the broken baths of Agripina, the Bocca (or mouth) between the Sorrentine peninsula and Monte Tiberio—the leviathan's head of sheer rock-cliff rising a thousand feet above the sea—and, disembarking, come to Marina Grande, where your two-hundred-pound trunk is taken on the head of a Capri lady, who, in her bare feet, patters along the stone wharf with it to the omnibus, while the strong men, hotel porters, wrestle with your hand-bag and umbrella. Thus "Johnny comes marching home!" Then you are terraced up by many a zigzag winding way five hundred feet to the saddle of the island—the piazza of the town of Capri.

I am alone in Capri, though I make believe you have followed me.

You ask me (in your steamer note): "Tell me the truth, why you go so far away 'for rest'?" You think with Naaman, the leper, who, when Elisha prescribed that he should wash himself in Jordan, said: "Are not Abana and Parphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the rivers of Israel?" Capri is my Jordan and the bathing is healing—for me, I hope. Here are eight hundred species of flora, and "the nightingale sings here all the night long." Even if here, perchance, one should happen, accidentally, to die, no funeral director with trappings of woe would funereally direct, but the Brothers of Misericordia, in white gown and mask, would silently come and on their shoulders bear what remained to the church of San Stefano and thence to the little cemetery.

But, my dear, wise, Little Teacher, you may not understand that of necessity—Necessity, that great God of some philosophic clay-eaters—I must veil the truth, for, in my case, it is ugly. Should I not have adopted the grammar of the mythologists and spoken of "It" as a goddess? The ultimate Truth is

Beauty. You remember Bernini left unfinished his statue of Truth in the vestibule of the Bernini palace, in Rome. None but the sculptor himself can say what was his ultimate design for the perfect statue of Truth. None but the Artist of the Universe can imagine the perfected Truth. Only He sees the end from the beginning. What is Truth? "Pilate therefore said unto Him, 'Art thou a King?' Then Jesus answered: 'Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice.' Pilate said unto him: 'What is Truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them: 'I find no crime in him.'" Whatever apprehension of the wisdom which passeth reason Pilate gathered from the informing eyes of his prisoner, in answer to "What is Truth?" he was satisfied with silence.

I suppose you went to church this morning. Wherever you went you found a noble "body of truth," but the whole, perfect truth has its face turned toward the infinite—the infinitely beautiful.

You will be patient with my evasion of your solicitous questioning (for which thanks!) while I tell you a little story, for I, too, have been to church, and, "edified" by the earnest simplicity of the eloquence of the priest-preacher, which rapt the attention of the simple folk and of my lord and lady, have heard an angel sing.

There at the organ—"the very best in Italy," say the Capri people—sat an old, brown-gowned man, and played with that delicate touch, that sensitive feeling of accord, which is the distinctive quality of one "playing by ear." As the notes stole lingeringly from beneath his fingers and rose jubilant to escape and soar, his tenor voice winged high, clear as a silver bell, melodious as a flute heard over wide waters, with the appealing cadence of Schubert's *Serenade*, filled chapel, transept and high-groined arch with a richness and quality of sound which, in its effect, I can only compare to the sense of that light "like a lily in bloom" within which Abou Ben Adhem "saw an angel writing in a book of gold"; and there, out of his very soul sat my seraph in brown pouring out his voice of gold, "a voice above singing."

In a side aisle, by one of the great pillars, stood a woman straight and tall; her face, under the cowl-like scarf worn over her head, "as it were the face of an angel," with joy-tears trickling in an ecstasy of release down her aged cheek.

The worshippers, at first joining in the anthem, ceased to follow, and, I do not know why or how, I found myself with them, all silent, impulsively to have risen; and we all stood immovably attent on the voice of the singer. Then, coming tremblingly with a few broken chords to the descendo, he ceased. There was a hushing sigh from the parted lips of the upturned faces as the singer bowed over the keys, his face in his hands. The people stood still a few moments, one not looking at another, and then, as in a daze of awakening, melted away. The woman caught up her scarf more closely about her face, halted hesitatingly in the shadow of the pillar, furtively yet longingly gazed on the bowed figure, then went swiftly out.

Do you not think we worshipped? Ah, so well: we in the melody to which the music had keyed us, that in which all nature finds

a note; but she, I was sure, in the singer as well.

I can understand you when, in our graver talk, you said: "I have no religion, but am very religious." You acknowledge no dogmatic creed as your rule of conduct, yet are reverently devotional to the truth. What was it St. Paul said? "The Truth shall make you free." That is, Truth is not bond of any creature or fashion, is not of man's making, wears no garments of semblance; is naked! The Decadent seeks Truth because she is naked. Yet we must need, however vainly, to personify Truth as a help to the imagination—a mental and moral hitching-post. The test of a Saviour of mankind is that His teaching of Truth shall be of universal application, or constitute a universal religion, so that each man, as he has his several need, finds himself included; and that such a Saviour in His life on earth shall be the highest example of that teaching, He must be both song and singer.

Your "good wishes" have followed me so far (thank you again), and, having them, I am not lonely, although in a strange land among strangers with which and

with whom I shall try to acquaint myself
and you.

* * * * *

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *November 2, 190-*.

MY DEAR ————:

Never was realized by me the force of the simile, "Like good news from a far country," until your dear letter came (forgive the last adjective, although it is my own). I can now appreciate that "blessings brighten as they take their flight," when their flight is of several thousand miles from you to me.

You ask me to "explain" myself. It is hard to conceive how so simple a person as I am requires a foot-note or an appendix. Maybe you intended the demand as a challenge-preliminary requiring a retort-courteous. Indeed, I do not call to mind any ambiguity in me worth explanation.

You also, in that connection, again ask me why I should leave my clients and my life-work to go "so *far* away." Let me tell

you something about Capri, and you shall judge whether it is not as interesting as a law-office and as cheerful as a court-room. Why it should be so to *me* "is another story"—which, perhaps, as an *envoi*, you may "know by heart." But, quilps and quiddities discarded, I came to explain, if not answer, to *myself* certain questionings which have so persistently demanded attention that I had to beat a retreat or be utterly routed. It may be that for me, even yet, "Care sits on the crupper of the horseman." However, if anywhere, "Earth hath no sorrow that *Capri* cannot heal." Here amid vineyards, and orange, lemon, and olive groves, the rose blooms all the year around, and the narcissus, the morning-glory, and camellia unfold.

A friend tells me a part of the story of it. From earliest times it has been noted for its mild winters and cool summers. The Nereids, affrighted by passing ships, took shelter here, and the song of the Sirens on the adjacent rocks could be heard by the native Teleboans as Ulysses sailed past. Virgil peopled it with Æbale, child of Telon, and the nymph Sabethes. Augustus Cæsar built palaces there—a palace for each of the

twelve gods. Then came Tiberius, and erected and inhabited Villa Jovis on the high-jutting eastern promontory of the island. Tiberius chose Capri for his retreat from the cares which infested his day, because it was accessible only by a narrow beach, being itself on all sides a precipitous cliff surrounded by a deep sea. In his Villa Jovis, Tiberius entertained astrologers and learned Greeks; Caligula, then a somewhat nice young man, lived with him; and there Vitellius, as a youth, had dreams of wild oats. There the poisoners of Drusus, the son of Tiberius, were brought, tried, tortured, and dropped out of the back door—a straight fall of a thousand feet to their sea graves. That same fall was also “a drop too much” for a fisherman who surprised the noble Emperor, as Suetonius says, “in a lark.” Here the old gentleman “got a fall” on his gardener for stealing a peacock from its roost in the imperial orchard, and here the supervisor of highways, who did not keep the roads in good order, was Tarpeianed. It is said that Crispina, wife of Commodus, and Lucilla, his sister, “were exiled to Capri before disappearing from the world.” People who visit Capri in these days acquire

a habit of "disappearing from the world"; that is, because Capri becomes all the world to them.

The ruins of Villa Jovis yet rear themselves as a monument to the rage for building in the old Roman days. Near by is the ancient lighthouse, of which a writer of the time says: "The lighthouse, rival of the wandering moon, sheds its rays sweet to anxious ships." The house yet remains, but it is "The Light that Failed."

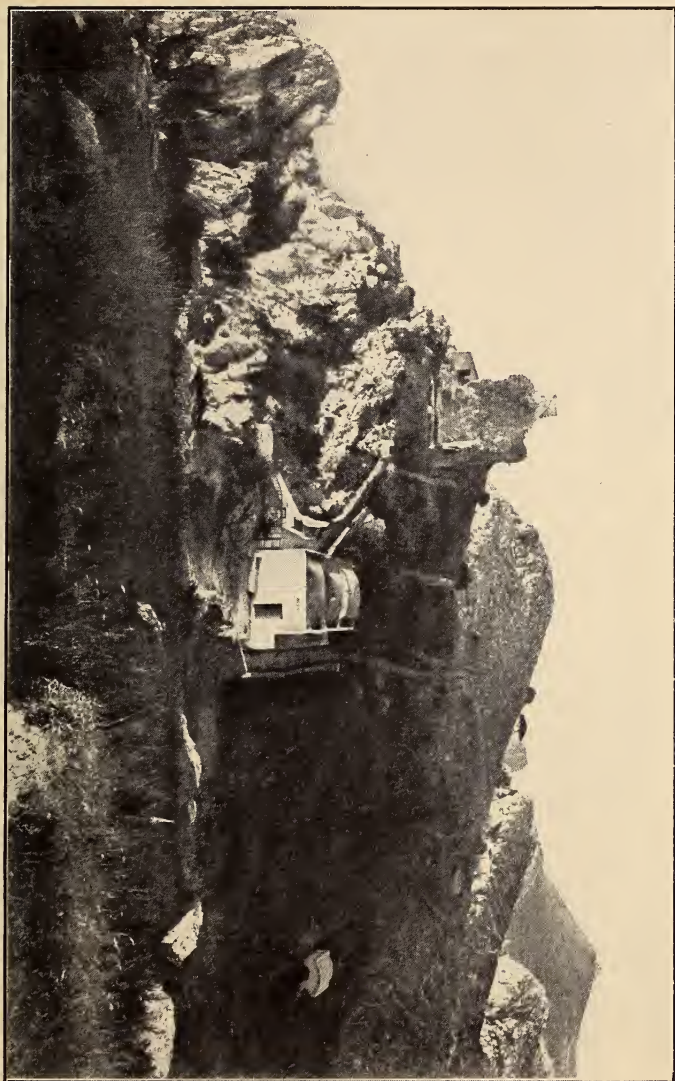
My friend also says that the Muse once dwelt in the olive groves of Capri, for

"Artheneus tells us of Blæsus, quoting a line of his poetry:

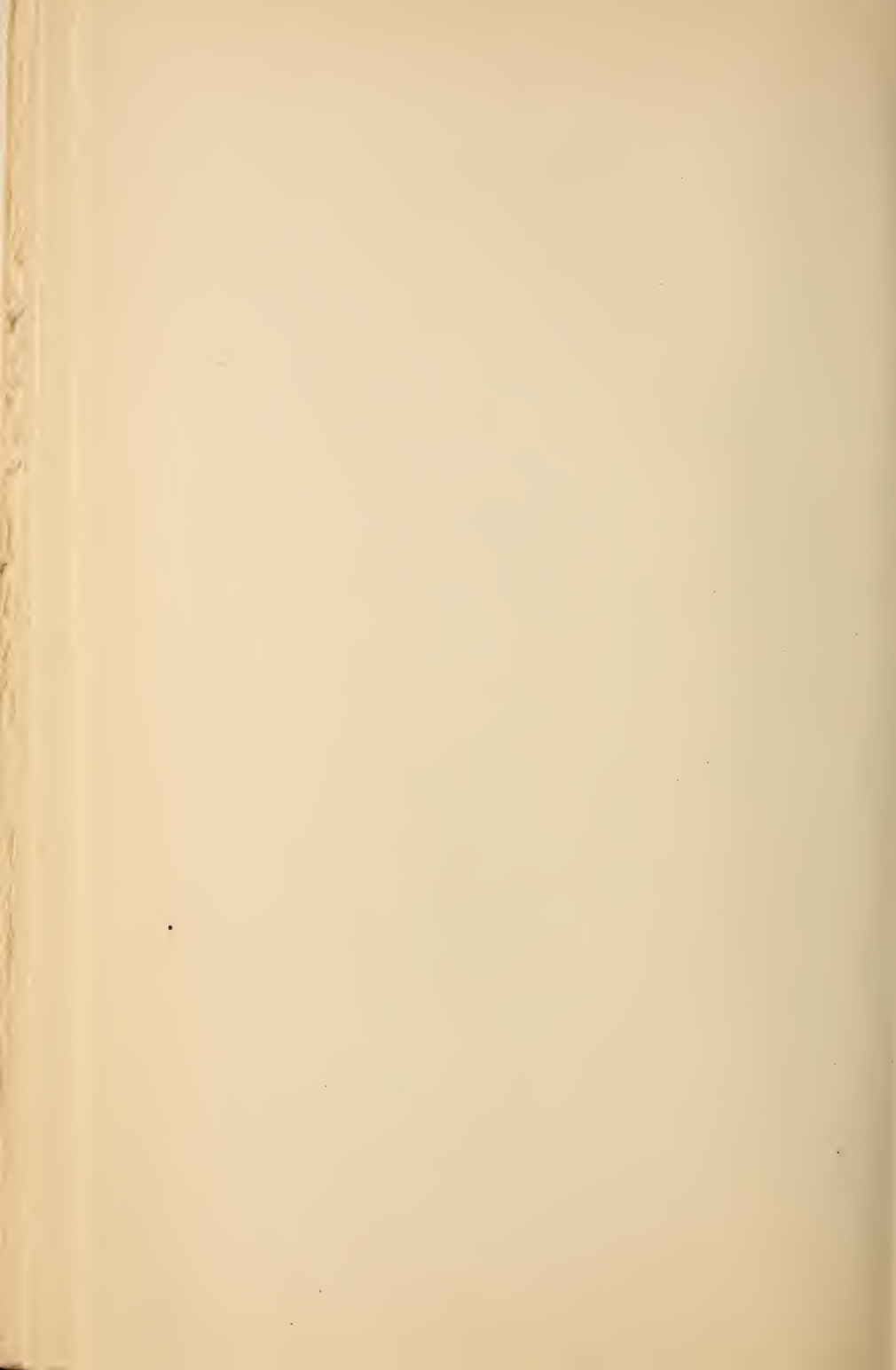
"'Pour out for me now seven measures of the best sweet wine.'

"This is the one articulate cry of ancient Capri which has come across the ages to us."

Capri Blanco and Capri Rosso are wines famous for their healthful purity; and, in recent times, they well may have lent their potency to the after-dinner enthusiasm of a notable painter, a visitor, who walked out with his fellow-diners on the favorite (and only level) promenade, the Via Tragara, to



"THE LIGHT THAT FAILED"



the Punta Tragara. There he stood and beheld, on the south, the wide sea with its rhythmic sighing against the rocks, the Faraglioni, five hundred feet below; Monte Solaro rising on the west in the looming grandeur of its two thousand feet, overtowering the gray walls and turrets of dismantled Castiglione; above, on the east, Monte Semaphore; while the white, flat-roofed, balconied little city shone silent, ghostlike in the solemn night. The wandering moon, full, as befitted the occasion, rode in the resplendent blue of the mid-sky, radiant, in her own lustre, as a goddess coming down out of the heavens. Thus standing, entranced by the witchery of the scene, with arms upraised in rapture to the Queen of Night, he cried: "George! I'm coming out here the first thing to-morrow morning to paint her!"

Upon the highest point of the ruins of Villa Jovis, overlooking the Bocca, stands, shining golden far out to sea, a statue of Ste. Maria, recently erected by the brother of the ex-King of Naples. Near it is a small chapel, built in the sixteenth century by the devotion of the Capri people, and there, as custodian, has lived for nearly half a century a gentle

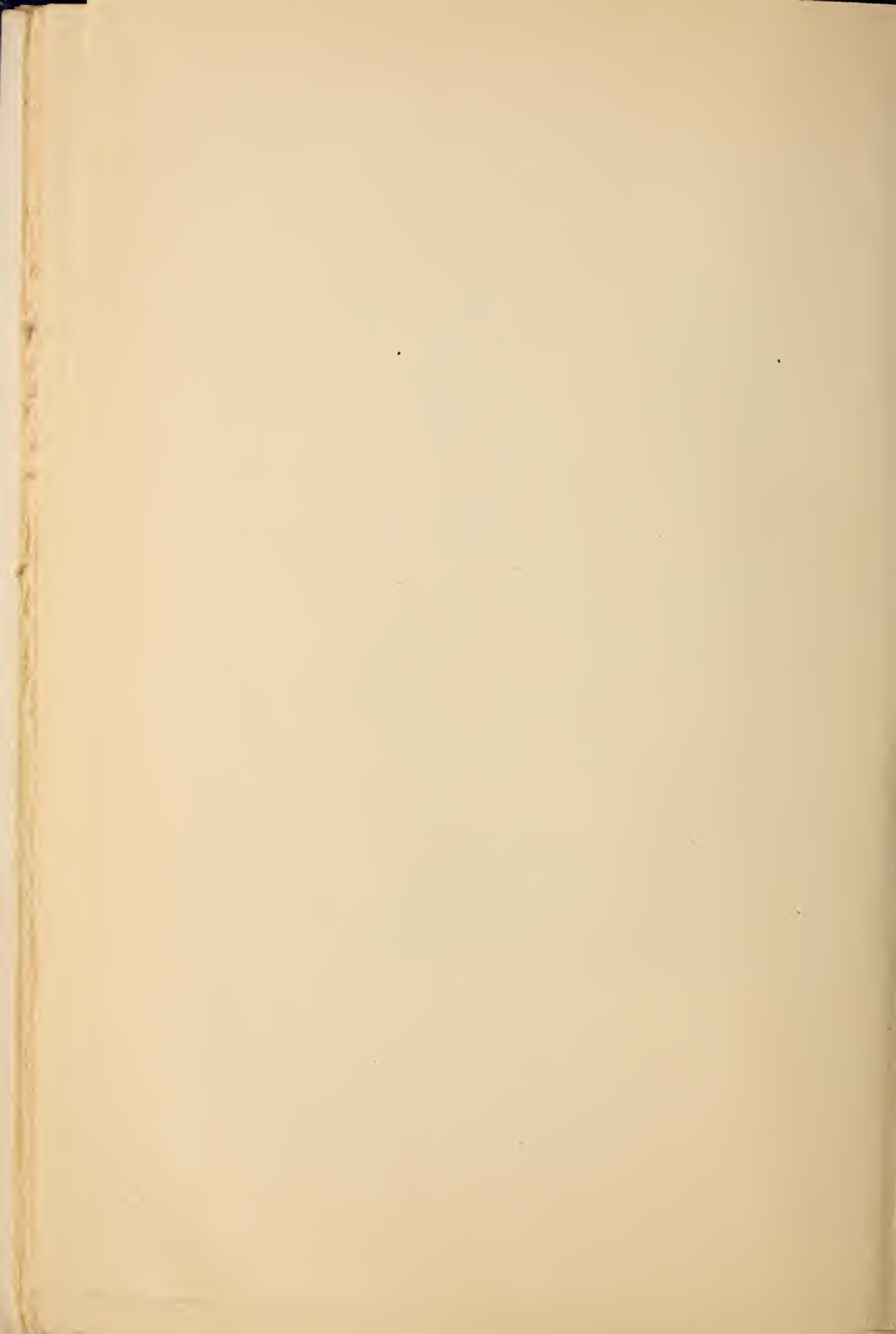
hermit, who now is aged more than four-score years. He seems a remaining soul, the last survivor of the Lares of the Villa Jovis. The "Lead, Kindly Light," of his shining brown eyes, the meditative brow, the responsive smile for the visitor in quick recognition of friendly appeal, the unconscious grace of movement, might well be taken for the sum of the qualities of the gentle Capri folk. He sits many hours in the sun in front of the west-facing chapel door, the broad expanse of the sea on his left, the smiling island of greenery before him, the Bay of Naples with Vesuvius and its mushroom clouds of steam and smoke on his right. I present myself, and his tall form rises to greet me in welcome as I ascend the steps to his door—the singing organist!

Shall I repeat to *him* your question: "Please explain yourself?" He could explain many things, with that high, broad forehead, and in the benignity of his gaze find excuse for more. Don't you think, if you were here, you would not think Capri "so far away"? If you could associate me with this ancient presiding genius of Monte Tiberio, would you yet think me "an enigma"?

I had almost forgotten your request that I



THE GOLDEN MADONNA. CHAPEL AND HERMIT



should acquaint you with "anything occult"
I might find in my travels which would give
zest to your contemplated paper for the
Woman's Club until I had several interviews
with the hermit—I was so occupied with
settling those "questionings!" Selfish in me?
It is only a good constitutional climb of an
hour from the town to the cozy chair by the
chapel door; and there, with the Madonna to
watch over us, my Ancient and I make close
friends with the breeze and the birds, and call
up the ghosts from the temples of the twelve
gods—who *have* gone "so far away."

* * * * *

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *November* 30, 190-.

MY DEAR _____,

Yes, as you hoped, I did enjoy a "Thanks-
giving Day" with (would you believe it?)
a real turkey-and-cranberry dinner. But
the glad thanksgiving was for your letter
received that day.

Your club paper seems to trouble you, al-
though the programme sets it for some time

to come. "Courage, Christian Soldier!" I have been sitting at the feet of my Gamaliel! But no apostolic succession can halo me as an apostle to any one. By the way, in the midst of your absorbing duties as a teacher, why not recreate yourself by a ramble through St. Paul's letters?—just for the sake of the novelty of it! It will be as if you opened a new book for the dénouement; for you must turn back to the beginning for local color, times, character, and motive—to Matthew *et seq.* You might get a religion! St. Paul was illumined by a supernal search-light to declare the mysteries of the life of the Spirit. How he makes plain the perfect way! "Behold I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." There is *some* occult for your paper! I await your club paper!

Of the thirty thousand strangers who tour to Capri yearly my Ancient has been visited daily during the long years past by men of many minds, and appears to have garnered the intellectual experiences and speculations of the times, and these have simmered down

in his lonely meditations into a residual compound which, as he administers to me allopathically, I shall endeavor to give you in homœopathic doses; for I have nothing else to do, and must "be doing something in the world," even at the risk of your thinking it better undone.

I am sorry I cannot give you word for word the language of my old friend, and I fear the transmitting medium of his monologues will only enable you to see as through a glass darkly. I speak of his monologues because, when I have led him to talk on the supernatural, the occult, and the spiritual, I have touched him where he lives! You should behold him sometimes when impassioned in his discourse. I have stayed late, and as in the starlight he has passed to and fro before me, "as a tree walking," gesticulating, his gown flowing with his movement, his head in the clouds of speech, his long beard punctuating his sentences on the sky, he was the traditional picture of a prophet of Israel. It is said that we should translate the record "Elijah was fed by the ravens" that he was fed by the tramps—the passers-by. I am not wise as to that, but

my dear old hermit has had food where of and who of I know not. One evening I led up to your subject.

In substance, he holds that there is and should be an Occult Science, a secret treasure of knowledge. That it is pursued by the elect is the mere condition of qualification, as is that of the priest, the physician, the lawyer, the artist, the artificer. That it is understood depends upon the same condition—that ability to comprehend. To His disciples Christ said: “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.” The elect are simply those who are in condition to receive. “He that *hath* ears to hear let *him* hear” is the foreordination of all knowledge. To the Occult has been referred the studies, experiments, and exhibitions of astrologers, necromancers, and magicians, the seekers after the philosopher’s stone, the elixir of life, and the universal solvent. They have been said to have had their “familiar” —spirits, devils—and from them bought or wrested the secrets forbidden of Nature. There was a woman at Endor that had a familiar spirit. It is curious how the devil

has been thought to reign exclusively over the unknown, the hidden powers of Nature. He is that vermiform appendix surviving from the primeval heat which both science and religion are submitting to surgery. He is the Hero of Ignorance. What Occult Science teaches cannot be known generally. The writings which teach of it are obscure except to the enlightened: they are in allegory, or they deal in symbols of which the initiated only have the key to the cryptogram. St. John's Revelation needs a revealer, and Genesis requires an esoteric teacher. There is no systematic grammar or Baedeker by which any one may certainly learn or practise occult science or know what it is. The student, the neophyte, the *chela*, must put himself in condition, mentally and physically, to know and pursue the science, or in fact to know that there is such a science. Reading Bulwer's *Zanoni*, one perceives how difficult it was for the young man to give himself to the pursuit. And the man, who had kept all the commandments, inquired of the Teacher what he should do to inherit eternal life, when required to go and sell all that he had and give to the poor, that he might have

treasures in heaven, and to come, follow Him, "went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions." The Occultist must give his whole heart to his purpose; every light of intelligence must be shining, every force of will must be in hand, or the awful foot of the brute will break the charmed circle of his endeavor. As he seeks to wring her secret from Nature, he must achieve a mastery over her by enveloping himself in a spiritual mantle with which to ungirdle this fierce Brunhild in her bridal bed.

Elisha, the prophet, knew what was whispered in the bedchamber of the hostile King of Syria. He healed Naaman, the leper, and caused the leprosy to cleave to the boodling Gehazi. An army sent to arrest him was stricken with blindness. At his behest thirsty land became refreshed with water. To relieve distress, upon his supplication, oil and bread increased many fold. He restored to life the son of the Shunamite woman. He magnetized a twig so that it drew up from the bottom of Jordan the borrowed axe of the bereft workman. He foretold birth and death, the victory and defeat of kings; he anointed men to be kings. The fact

that his so-called "miracles" are narrated in the Bible does not argue that Elisha did not know what he was about; nor does it preclude inquiry as to how he wrought them. He was the pupil of Elijah, and was himself the teacher and manager of a School of the Prophets. There must have been resident in him a quality of life, a potential force, a lodestone of vitality, by means of which he could magnetize the dull iron of common life. He had a sixth sense pervasive of space. His soul was an inhabitant of the fourth dimension. He was clairvoyant to see the powers and principalities of the air encamped about him, with power to open the eyes of his servant likewise to view them. He was clairaudient of the secrets of kings. He knew and foretold—maybe, caused—the flight of the besieging Syrian army because of fear at the "noise of chariots and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host." He was a man of physical superiority, and by his mode of life peculiar. He attained an incorporeal development unique even among that spiritual race, the Hebrews; so that, in after times, when Jesus appeared working wonders "some said it was Elias." The

pupil of Elijah far exceeded his occult teacher in power and prescience, and covered the stern qualities of his preceptor with a mantle of Kindliness.

The fakirs of India, so far and beyond that they are mere prestidigitateurs, by heredity and long-continued exercise of will, have a faculty of animal magnetism, or hypnotism, by which they delude the imagination of the onlooker, so that he apprehends any object at their suggestion; or it may be, in instances, they do project appearances of particular objects, shapes, dummies, to which the spectator attributes life and characteristics, as must have been the case in the contest between Moses and the magicians before Pharaoh. Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt"; was a neophyte at Hieropolis, the priestly college, was educated in the priesthood as became the adopted son of Egypt's King, who was both King and the High Priest of the Great God Ra, and so was possessed of "that divinity which doth hedge about a King."

So, in exemplification of your subject, you might induce your club to buy a Bible for

its library. But while it is engaged in so depleting its treasury, let me add some further reflections—you may call them hypotheses—with which my instructor has favored me.

He says that the evolution of the Human Soul is one thing, the birth or devolution of the Spirit, or Spiritual Soul, quite another. The trinity of man is body, soul, and spirit. The body and human soul are matters of evolution, but the spiritual soul is not a matter of evolution—the survival of the fittest—for it is an emanation from the Infinite One. The Spirit is that image of Him—the “likeness” into which man became—for “God is a Spirit.” It is this spirit which is the wonder-worker. Man’s wilful denial of that spirit is a refusal of life everlasting. To be conscious of its indwelling is to “inherit eternal life.” As man can recognize what is without himself only from that which he has within, it is essential to his perception of things spiritual that he himself be spiritually minded. “The natural man,” says St. Paul, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” The quest for the Holy Grail is to him who

has already drunk of the wine of the spirit. As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written:

"Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him.

"But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.'"

Now if there should be any heartburnings about the diversion of the club's funds for The Book, you have only to refer it to the above so apt quotation coming from my Aged One to prove the existence of the occult, "the wisdom that hath been hidden," and to identify the persons to whom and through

what interposition it is revealed. But hear my friend explain:

“The human soul is merely illustrated by the personality. The animal soul is of the animal. As man is an animal he has an animal soul; and, as he is a man, he has evolved or is capable of evolving a human soul which, despite immense longevity of ages upon ages, may finally lose its personality, disintegrate, and dissolve into other forms of semi-material life which is ‘the second death,’ or, by attainment of the Spiritual quality, achieve the condition of living everlastingly. It is the inexorable law of cause and effect—which is justice—in things moral that man’s nature and condition in the future life depend, and they are the effects of tendencies voluntarily encouraged by him in the past and present. This necessitates future lives on earth, as man in this life is the product, the effect, of past lives. Nature loses nothing. ‘Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that *shall* he also reap. For he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.’ The occultist deals with the causes of things. In this age of investigation experiments in

all matters which may be demonstrated to any of the five senses have ceased to be deemed occult, and the domain of the so-called supernatural has been reduced and almost limited to the consideration of the so-called immaterial qualities of the body and spirit; that is, to the psychical feature of occult science. The medium is one whose vital force, by reason of bodily imperfection, escapes as water oozes through a sun-dried barrel, or is one who has a superabundance of that fluidic force which more than fills the body and trickles over the brim. It is in this substance of vitality oozing or overflowing out of the living body that the 'spirit' bodies of the departed in Hades, and other intelligences as well, live again, and for the time of immersion are filled with appreciable life. This fluid, 'biogen, od,' is substantial. It is not only such stuff as dreams are made on, but is the dream-stuff itself. It is the magic carpet. It is that to which the hypnotist appeals, and which materializes in the imagination of the subject all that is suggested to him. It is simply the vehicle of the life principle; so intimate the connection with the body that

while it remains unexhaled Lazarus may be bidden to 'come forth!' It is this substance which flees when one is frightened to death. It is the 'hoorla,' the mirror, which receives and retains impressions of things, of thoughts and images in the minds of others as well. Its supra-normal development gives us the medium, the clairvoyant and clairaudient, the gift of second-sight, the seer. This development is a matter of proper (or, as the ignorant consider, improper) exercise. The clairvoyant is a person who discovers objects concealed from sight by distance or intervening obstacles; who sees into things without opening them, or has second sight. It is the positive and voluntary, instead of the passive and involuntary, use made of this fluid or ghost-stuff of the medium, which the clairvoyant and clairaudient person uses to sense things. We are creatures of five senses in search of that sixth, whose faculty of expression may be Swedenborg's 'communication by correspondence,' but whose self may be the expression of that real Soul—that Spiritual Soul in whose potency lies the force to set in motion and to dominate all the bodily and psychic capabilities of man. If

such potency can be evoked the laying on of hands means something, and the healing of paralytics and the ills arising from obstructions of the blood becomes a possibility: but this 'cometh only through fasting and prayer.'

"The practices of asceticism are supposed to require mortification of the body, but uncleanness or disregard of the body is as repugnant to the highest devotion to occult science as idle or lustful thoughts are to purity of heart. These practices may be followed by those who cannot otherwise disregard fleshly indulgence and concentrate their thoughts. The prescriptions to 'subject the body' and to 'bring the body under' are only applicable to a weak or diseased mind. 'One man hath faith to eat all things; but he that is weak eateth herbs.' It is only in the perfect body of 'one among ten thousand and altogether lovely' who is capable of the sustained labors, the self-denials, the courage of will to become a hierophant so as to control the forces of nature as well outside as within himself. No doubt the schools of the Prophets have been maintained to this day.

It could hardly be that a man having attained to the 'gift of the spirit' would willingly break the ladder of his success, but the rather, as he ascended, would drop his mantle upon some Elisha of his hope. One hardly could be expected to leave no heir of him succeeding who had heard from afar the whispered consultation in the King's bed-chamber; or who had suffered unharmed the bite of poisonous vipers and fought unconquered with lions at Ephesus; or who, 'whether in the body or out of the body,' had seen the mysterious progress of the soul in the nether world, and heard voices whose speech it was 'not lawful for man to utter.' The authority which Jesus gave to His disciples, whom He sent forth to heal all manner of diseases, must have been accompanied with instructions how to exercise as well as to avail themselves of the power given them by Him when He retired with them into 'a mountain apart.' Is there any miracle to him who performs it? He may not be able to define or analyze, or to explain the origin or action of the force he is conscious of having employed. He knows, however, 'that virtue has gone out of him.' There is nothing

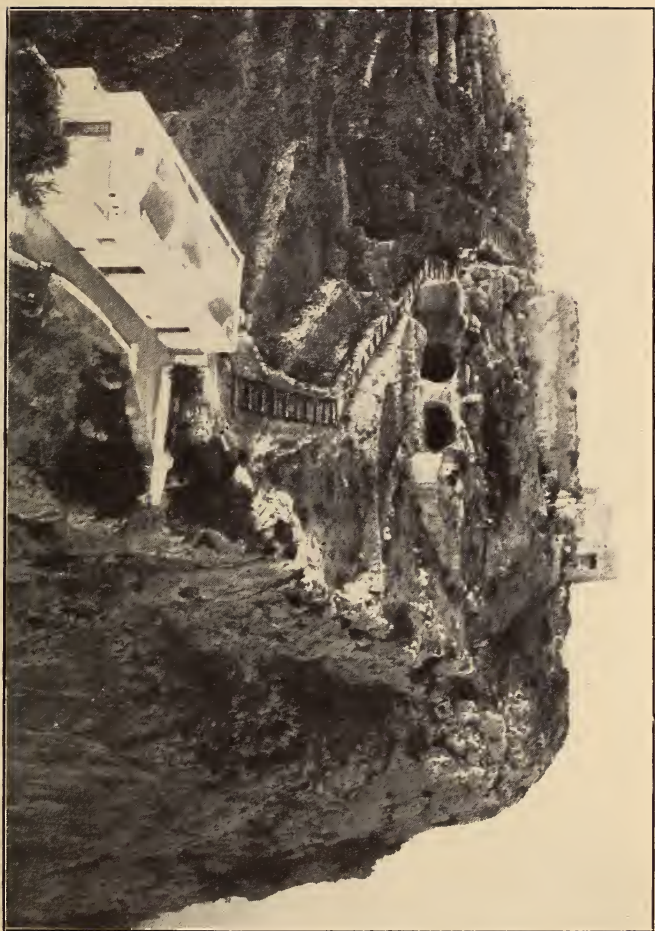
supernatural. The will of God in nature cannot be supernatural. God works no miracles which are so to Him. His works are past finding out, that is all. Man is now engaged in the development of his human soul: some men have attained to the possession of a spiritual soul, and are accounted as of the Divine. We may become conscious of the existence of it as a flashing spark in the recesses of a vast cavern, and lift our hands in the hope of realizing its flame in the ages upon ages. To realize it in full consciousness is to have 'our face to shine' and our 'raiment to become shining, exceeding white as snow, as no fuller on earth can whiten them.' The attainment of this supreme consciousness is the destiny of man in his procession in the ages on ages through the world; how to obtain it belongs to the study of the psychology of occult science—a religion. The Gospel of Christ teaches for mankind the possibility of possessing this Christ within us—the 'hope of glory, the hope of everlasting life.' The transfiguration was a physical manifestation of its presence, the resurrection a proof of its potential quality, and the ascension of its be-

ing in the image of God. The Centurion at the crucifixion recognized its presence when he exclaimed: 'Truly this man was the Son of God!' The Spirit only can be said to be the Son of God—the Only Begotten; gross matter is the work of His hands. The highest climax of the drama of Job is the ecstatic outburst of hope realized: 'I *know* that my Redeemer liveth, and at last He will stand up upon the earth: and after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then *without my flesh* shall I see God.' How grand are the possibilities of Man! Need he longer say, as Manoah to his wife, 'We shall surely die, for we have seen God'? The occultist endeavors to answer the question: 'All things in heaven and in earth are of God, both the visible and the invisible. Such as is the invisible is the visible also; for there is no impassable bound between spirit and matter. Matter is spirit made exteriorly cognizable by the force of the Divine Word. When God shall resume all things by love—the divine attraction—the material shall be resolved into the spiritual and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.'"

When my Ancient had so ended the

Occultist's rhapsody he was so exultant of the vision of the coming spiritual new heaven and new earth that I felt he would be more lonely with than without my company. In his pale, upturned face I saw the glorified calm of the Great Peace, and, without a word, I left him and went quietly down the star-lit way. Stumbling along, I wondered if that Supervisor of Tiberian roads had not come back and was in office again. The marble palaces which once adorned the Roman highway were not; the rumbling chariots and ramping horses, the processions of priests of Isis, of Mithra, and of the twelve gods of Rome with their flaming torches, blaring trumpets, dancing youths, and the thousand slaves of burden, had gone; and there was only a lonely rock-paved and stone-walled path with the one solitary footman pondering the words he had just heard, and wondering if in any former life he had ever been, or in the Great Hereafter he would be, companion, friend (or ————?) of *you!*

I do not suppose the Hermit would object to your availing yourself of anything he has said; he has no use for speech, or anything



MONTE TIBERIO AND RUINS OF VILLA JOVIS

else, except to give it away. As for myself,
I am still sitting at his feet—at the foot of
the class—and remaining

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *December 24, 190-*.

MY DEAR ————:

I posted my last letter hurriedly to catch the home-bound steamer, and to give you my Aged's ideas on occultism for use in your paper; and I am glad it arrived in the nick o' time for the purpose, but I was not prepared for the result you have been so speedy to relate in your letter gladly received the day before yesterday, part of which I could not resist the temptation to read to the Aged Author on the evening of that day. It is the part in which you say that, with many quotation marks, and "It is saids," and "It is helds," you interweaved your paper with extracts from the Hermit's outgivings; but had not given any consideration to the few lines about reincarnation, a subject in which

from the gardens of God and then come back here for a span of threescore and ten years out of, say, every two thousand? If we could only realize that the true life is that of the conscious spirit, we would consider our immersion into this world but a baptism to a new birth in "heaven." I am reminded of a question you ask: "What do we do between births?" "Sleep, perhaps to dream," says Hamlet. But what do you do now? You think. The outer world with which, during this life, you come into contact through your senses, merely furnishes you food for thought; then you go away until you have exhausted the subject and are hungry again. You wrestle with ignorance, the lack of divine perfection (some call that lack, Evil); you touch the earth and gather strength of experience, labor, suffering, love, and finally, when in exhaustive possession of all, conquer. You learn and sing the score of all the music of this world, and, when proficient, join the "Choir Invisible." In heaven there are many mansions, and you must furnish and inhabit them all. The fact of His going prepared them for your faith.

I do not think that you need be afraid of the "gods many" of St. Paul, or of the Pantheon of the pagan.

If there be any differences in the degrees of advancement of humanity in the spiritual world when released from the wheel of incarnation, they will not be greater than those on the earth now. There will be work and joy enough—as there is here and now. As Admiral Schley said, after the victory off Santiago: "There's glory enough for all."

I know there are many questions as to how, when, and where you lived during past lives on earth. When you think of it, the same questions arise as to *you*—you, the Thinker; you, the Dreamer, the Word-Builder, during this present life—who have in haunt "many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore."

If the essential *you* is a veritable thing, a substance however ethereal, however subtle—as magnetic force, electricity, or the ether itself, is a thing—then you have existed before you became manifested in that beautiful body of yours; and I may loyally add, so lived that you deserved your present habitation. Granted that you lived on this planet, you were

with your kindred-soul relations, of all sorts, and you gravitated to this life Kinward. Even obedience to the law of motion by way of least resistance would bring this accord. As "Love is stronger than death, many waters cannot drown it," the soul seeks its companion-soul when reincarnated. Then don't you think loving should find its object without striving, without impatience, without jealousy? It should come from above, as the dew from the sky of former lives. True love is not made, it is born; it is the child of the past and of interbirth dreams; it is the honey stored from all the flowers of the life-fields. The object loved is the ideal pictured by all our past lives—for they are the painters. Such love is worth waiting for as we wait for the rose to bloom from seed planted long ago. If we do not, in this one life, meet our ideal, this true love, then single blessedness is no failure.

You say: "It is not very amusing to have to be born again and to work out my salvation. Once is enough for me. So far, life is hardly worth living again." But, my dear, you will not live the same life again; you will know better how to live. Last evening I was at the

chapel door again and told my Ancient what you had further written: that you wished you could live your present life over again if you could only be born with the knowledge you now have, for you could then avoid making many grievous mistakes and order your life on different and greatly higher levels.

"Yes, yes," he began, "that is the wish of unreflection; but it shows a noble discontent which is the seed of progress. Your friend may have cause for her dissatisfaction. She may have lost some opportunity, failed to realize some ideal—as we all have. Ah me! Yet the fact that she perceives and acknowledges such loss and failure is evidence of her high intent. She can begin a new life, be born again, *now!* Let her re-form her broken ideals, and, having unmasked her enemies—her weaknesses and faults—begin the battle anew. However, she may console herself, in part; she has already fought a good fight—for what was she when she last lived on earth? Her discontent is of ancient seeding, and is now fruiting in grander aspirations. All that she is now is plus what she has been in the past. Let her consider

the pit from which she has been digged, and take courage. I am glad, young man, that you have such a friend."

As he concluded we sat in silence for some time, watching the full moon sinking over Monte Solaro into your west, and I, following it over sea and land, came to the gate of our parting; then, rather thinking aloud as in a dream than responding to him, I said: "So am I." I felt him detect and follow my gaze, and then:

"Indeed!" was all my Wise One said.

Once I heard, "as the voice of one crying in the wilderness," one who had lost the way, was bewildered, despairing, for the paths were tangled, crooked; before and behind was the gloom of impending forest: "I wish I had never been born, but *I cannot get back!*" The mistakes of the years past were a maze, the future was a continuing labyrinth. It was dreadful, that "I cannot get back!" To such a caged starling, is there not some solace in the fact that although it cannot get back it can go forward—can rest, review, and repent its errors, and come again into the wilderness and make straight its paths? Withal, there is one reflection which gives

us pause. There is no escape of the soul from reincarnation by shuffling off this mortal coil; death does not give absolution; if one life is not worth living, we must live until it is made worth while; the coward suicide but prolongs his task of Sisyphus.

That we are to be born again into this earth-life *is* what makes this life worth living, my old friend says. That we shall try again gives a zest to the present; for the manner in which we enjoy or suffer now we will enrich or impoverish the hereafter life, with the added enrichment of the intermediate rest, the dream-life. The motives, the thoughts (for "thoughts are things") will give suggestion to the hereafter even as "the child is father of the man." The lives past are an anagoge to the present one. If it is not "amusing" it is verily interesting. When we go hence, don't you think we shall ponder of things left undone, of mistakes to be corrected, kindnesses foreborne; the failure of one may become the triumph of the next life; the unsatisfied longings of the one be adjusted in the next by wisdom gained from reflection in our intermediary life—"heaven." And so we will go on through the ages until

in the divine progress (for it is a progress) of all things we become "sons of God." Oh! life is worth living, worth loving, because we may, some day, attain to the love which God has for all things.

In your past life you may have been a pupil of some master of the ferule and rod, and often craved to show him what a teacher should be. I hope, now, if he is learning his lessons of you, his head is hot under the coals of fire you heap upon it.

It is this past—the causes set in motion from life to life—that is the suggestion which projects the lesson of one life into another, and is really that which Charles Grant, in his "Poem of Life," personifies:

"Ere a babe is born to its bliss or harm,
God takes the naked soul on His arm,
And whispers a great word in his ear,
So that it cannot choose but hear.
On whatever land that babe shall grow,
Whether the world shall hear or know,
If he be strong, or if he be weak,
No other word his soul shall speak."

Blessed is she who hath ears to hear that word! You have heard the story of the

“Lost Name”? The true name of the Supreme, the Only One, was given by Him to a wise man, who was to impart it only with his dying breath to one other. It was passed thus from one to another until a Wise One, dying, sought to transmit it to a youth as his successor, but, as with expiring breath he was uttering it, the youth turned to listen to the song of a girl beneath the window, and—alas! the name, the holy word, unheard, was lost! So, now, we have only man-made symbols to signify the unutterable mystery.

Oh no, I am not “studying for the ministry”; I am simply hermiting.

You further add that you avoided mention in your club paper of the Hermit’s occult explanation of the faculties of Spirit-mediums, because, as their performances are mostly in the dark, you “did not deem it best to introduce the shady subject.” Let me suggest what I infer from the Ancient’s theory (?) of vibrations. The light from the sun is hurled to the earth at the rate of about ninety-five million miles in eight minutes; in vibrations it beats upon and penetrates the atmosphere of the earth, which is about forty miles thick and has a weight of fifteen pounds to the

square inch on the earth's surface. It strikes the earth with a direct force equal to nearly a hundred thousand tons weight. Now, don't you think that force must be accounted when dealing with that subtle fluid (if it may be so called) of vital or magnetic energy oozing out of or overflowing from the Medium? It would seem that the direct rays of the sun driven, palpitating with throbbing percussion upon the earth would break in storm upon the fragile, tenuous waves of ooze or overflow of mediumistic magnetism, and drown any spook who adventured his frail bark across the Styx. The surging push of the sun's rays of light is a force which continually aids the centrifugal flight of the planets, in a degree counteracting the power of gravity of the sun's immensity.

Those who deny the longing and the pitiful attempts of the disembodied to communicate with their kindred on earth usually disclose a preference to cut out the hereafter altogether—probably for reasons of their own. I broached inquiringly this subject of mediumship to the Hermit, but all the information (?) he vouchsafed was, "Alas, poor Medium!"

Yet there must be some fluid to bear the

wireless telegrams of disunited souls, which the patience of the open-minded Scientist and the hope of the Christian shall yet probatively rediscover.

Who shall say that, in the complementary and now invisible (as the infra-red and the ultra-violet) rays of light, the ghostly fingers that rap and write may not become sensible to mortal eyes?

* * * * *

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *December 27, 190-*

MY DEAR ————:

For fear of being tiresome to you, I did not attempt to answer all the inquiries in your last (club!) letter. Besides, I have had another *sitting* with my Gamaliel.

I am pleased to find you interested in this little island, but hardly flattered by your saying this "dot on the earth must derive its color from the eyes which seem to be in love with it"; and you intimate that Capri Rosso has also lent its rubiness to beautify

it. But I can say, as Daniel Webster said of Massachusetts: "There she is. Behold her, and judge for yourselves!" It is not her blue, white, red, and green grottos, her caves, her crumbled altars of Mithra and the gods; the Saracen watch-towers embrasuring its west coast; the grim, tattered castle of Barbarossa on steeped Monte Solaro, or even the good people who cheerily build and plant, worship and make merry; but it is the altogether, the atmosphere of the whole island, which makes one feel not only alive but living.

You say you are "glad to learn about the occult matters the Hermit talked of," and ask me, "as his pupil, to be prepared for 'exams.'" My Seer is sufficient unto himself—an oracle on his own account, without any "assumacy." He believes in the mandatory permission given originally when Adam was installed in the command of the earth, his commissary limited by: "Of every grain that beareth seed thou shalt eat"; and, through obedience, the days of his years are threescore years and ten; and by reason of strength they are fourscore, yet is their strength *rest and gladness!*

The trouble with some of your club members is that they enjoy the bliss of ignorance; particularly that one who came out of ambush with her 22-calibre black eyes levelled at you and demanded that you stand and deliver with: "Oh! what you say about Elisha—why, that's in the Bible! Give us something fresh!" You might refer such a one to the evidences gathered in late years, since scientific methods in collecting *facts* have been instituted, and to the deductions therefrom which at least tend to prove that the individual soul (Spirit, Thinker) does exist after death, and that it is possible for it to communicate with the living (but, ah! why awaken the smiling dreamer?); that it, in a bodily shape, while of the body as well as when recently not, can, possibly, visit and be seen by the living. People in general are heedless of the great work done in these days to blow into flame the embers of smouldering faith in the resurrection of the Christ—the Spiritual Soul in the Spiritual Body.

Indeed, if your club guerilla wishes some really recent refreshment, you might refer her to *The Life of Father Ignatius, the Monk of Llanthony*.

The Via Tiberio, wall-lined, between villas and vineyards, leads up by the "Caffè Margherita and Carolina," where the Siren, Carolina, "always gay," greets this traveller, "who passeth by this road so late" (or early), with a tarantella carol from her overlooking balcony; while the gentle Evangeline-faced Margherita offers a bouquet of the fragrant narcissus as he reaches her door; thence up by the lighthouse—once "wont to shed its rays sweet to anxious ships"—and over ruined Tiberian galleries, halls, amphitheatres, armories, and cisterns, until he again finds the gentle hermit, who, having seen him a long way off, awaits his prodigal. Neither falls on the other's neck nor kisses—although falling was an ancient practice up here, and kissing must not be surprised; alas, poor fisherman! Yet one might kiss the sweet-faced old man and be forgiven. I wonder if, half a century ago, some fair Margherita was not seen afar off and, prodigally, kissed and been forgiven! My daily, and often nightly, pilgrimages to my old friend, up there on the lonely mountain under the blue tent of God, have given me something to think of at least.

I was going to tell you something which suggested my "wonder," and then I hesitated for the space of the last sentence, thinking I ought not to tell tales out of school; yet I can trust you with all my heart—and do—why not with something of that of another; though I know the sacredness with which you treasure (from *me*) the secret of your elect one! Besides, this is not a secret—simply something occult, to the ignorant—and may be a belated chapter in that "little story" I told you in my first letter. Last evening, as the sun tarried over Monte Solaro, and was paying his parting respects to the golden Madonna, to the ruins of Villa Jovis and the little chapel, before seeking a shrine beyond the sea, I came up for a night's occult revel with my Ancient, and with my kodak, that iconoclast of all the gods of modesty, surprised my dear old friend standing on the steps leading up to the chapel, and gazing mournfully and tenderly upon a tall, kerchiefed figure in white below, whose face I could not see (as it was fixed on him), until, as I advanced, she turned toward me. She was old, for her hair was streaked with gray; but young, for "the light that never was on sea or

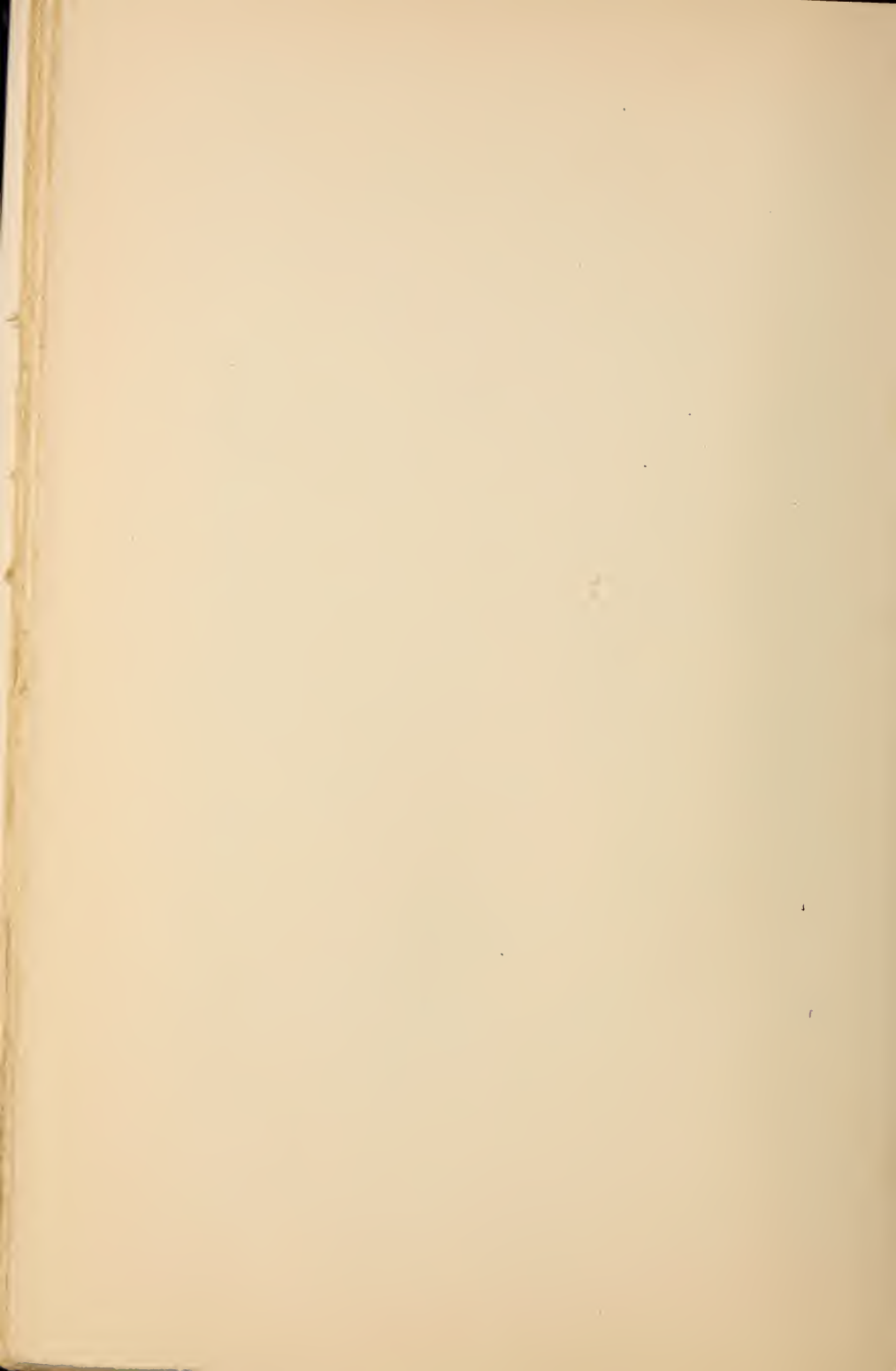
land," effulged her face, and the lines of patient years fled away and caused her to be transfigured. She was straight and strong, for she had borne the heat and burden of the day of a Capri workwoman; she was glorified, for she loved! For her was not written:

"There's a love for a year, a love for a day,
But alas for the love that lasts away!"

While she but glanced at my coming upon this innocent tryst, she was not ashamed or embarrassed, but, turning, walked away with the free step and joyance of bearing of one refreshed with the wine of the spirit which her threescore years and ten but enriched. And he, a hermit! The extreme gentleness of my Abélard, as he greeted me and led the way to our accustomed seat, was enhanced by a subdued joyousness. I was so perplexed by my self-reproaches for untimeliness in invading the sanctuary of the aged couple, that, to try to hide my confusion by the rule of opposites, I was led to ask the most irrelevant and malapropos question: "What is the genealogy of hell?" My dear old friend "never turned a hair," but with the serenity



"AND HE, A HERMIT!"



of a babe answered: "Ah! hell is the fear of the future and is born of the past. Fear is the mother of care; and you know what killed the cat."

"But what was it that feared?" I asked.

"Ah," said he, "that's another question. There was *something* that feared: the past cast its shadow, and out of it fear arose, its spectre. But what was it evoked the ghost? It was that something which does fear, does hope, grieve, rejoice, hate, love. It is the I, the ego, the soul—call it what you will—the subjective; the subliminal; the consciousness of consciousness, the residuum of thought experiences; the sublimate essence of all our emotions, desires, personalities; the individual entity—it is the substance of them all, the Self."

"But what is the origin of the 'substance'?"

"My young friend," said the old man, "that origin is, as the Jewish scriptures have it, 'in the beginning?' The spirit of life pervades all material things (and I am not saying there is any other than the material—that is, substance) in the heavens above and the earth beneath, in one form or another. That spirit of Life was breathed out of the

Infinite, the God, the Beginner; and, formed and crystallized under His law, by process of that law, evolves ever higher and more complex forms of expression of that life, and finally is resolved back into Himself, completing the circle of manifestation. Now man, combining in himself all the preceding forms, cannot, if he would, stop the spiral climb of evolution. He must, by the divine propulsion, ever seek that life more abundantly until he shall acquire what we may call a spiritual life—the life of the soul as self-existent. Can the evolution of the spirit of life, the life force, be complete? Can the persistence of force, the conservation of energy, the law of continuing, be exhausted, come to a standstill, in the production of a mere man-animal?

“You may have a personal God, an anthropomorphic God, if you will—if it helps you to comprehend, in any degree, by enlarging the proportions of the highest conceivable personality, until you may contemplate Him in all man-like perfection—and yet you will have but a bare suggestion of what may be the All-wise, the Beneficent, the Almighty, the Only One. To this end,

as helps to the imagination, man has shrined his images; but the old command is upon the wise: 'Thou shalt make no graven images.' Yet, can you look up yonder at the myriad stars, at the Milky Way—that nebula of world-stuff—at the illimitable spaces no glass has yet pierced, and bridle your God to this less than an atom in His universe, and say that all this was made and perpetuated for a mere man-animal?"

The Aged One had risen, and, stretching his arms aloft and abroad, as if to call an expression of his idea down from the immensity, exclaimed: "Oh, that I might know *Him!*"

After a contemplative pause, he turned to me with folded arms, as if in silent apology, and I asked:

"Then you have heard of the Eastern doctrine of Nirvana?"

"Oh yes," he answered. "I have had several very learned visitors here who believed in it. Why should a rain-drop refuse to flow down into the ocean? We may be in accord, or at one, with God; but patience, my son, the Universe will be a graybeard before you or I shall be *of* God. When we

can think God's thoughts (and, remember, you are one of them), we won't object to become *of* Him; but, until then— Good-night!"

The Hermit sought to tell me what hell is. Let me give you the geography of it—and then some!

Seers, poets, and saints have localized hell and peopled an under-world with lost souls—mostly those of their enemies; but they, and even the Amiable Hermit, had not dreamed of a still farther but easily accessible place for the final abode of sinners. It remained for the Rev. Obedia Mashim, of the eight-gallon persuasion, 'way back in the "airly days," on his return to his congregation, after having driven his hogs to market at Cincinnati, and lingered there until Saturday night to sell them on a rising market, and having scruples against travelling on Sunday, was forced to remain in the city over the next day, to describe the wrecking of the *Moselle* (April 25, 1838), and proclaim to his flock upon his return home a new geography of souls. After making his excuses for absence on the preceding Sunday, he proceeded:

"I was seekin' some place of worship, but,

like Noah's dove, I found no rest for my foot; but, meanderin' by the river-sides, there mine eyes beheld the new steamboat *Mosellee* reposin' upon the bosom of the beautiful Ohio, her steam blowin' off, her bells ringin', and on the wharf a vast crowd huzzahin', singin', and laughin' as the *Mosellee* started on her trial trip up the river. Then a band of music desecrated the Sabbath air with its audacious goin' on. Slowly she backed from the wharf, and then her great wheels churned the waters like the leveeathan in his fury, and she swum out into the stream, a magnificent structure and a credit to the city of her birth. Then, let mine ears be deaf and mine eyes blind, if I did not hear fiddlin' and see dancin' on her deck—aye, fiddlin' and dancin' and laughin' on the Lord's Day! Fiddlin' and dancin'!—the men with their arms around the women! I fain would have turned mine eyes away, so full was I of wrath. But there was the *Mosellee*, as she swep' up the river, the grand work of men's hands; and the sun in the blue heavens did not cease to shine on the abomination of wickedness of that Sodom and Gomorrah on her deck! Up the river she flew like a bird, and then

slewed about near the other side, when, all of a sudden, she explored her boilers—ah! She blew everything sky-high—ah! And all that fiddlin' and dancin' crew—ah! She blew some to heaven and some to hell and some clean away over into Kentucky—ah!"

And thus it was that the bloody hunting-ground came to be a new *locus umbra* in the world of spirits.

Of the three places you have choice. In heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage; in hell it is too hot for domestic tranquillity; there remains Kentucky—with *you* I'll risk *her*.

I fear your patience will not endure what to me has become so interesting—my conversations with my friend. You have your daily work (I hope it is not labor), and I have my continuing leisure, coupled with an old habit of being busy—at something! You may think an "old man of the sea" is riding me, but, I assure you, it is I who am being carried away; I only wish it were to *you*. But this may not be, *mea miserum*! Suppose I join the Hermit, and "so let the wide world wag as it will, we'll be gay and happy still!" Then there would be no hermit,

only two jolly companions. I fear, however, that would violate the injunction: "Be not unequally yoked together."

Let me say good-night!

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *January* 30, 190-.

MY DEAR —————:

Yours of the 15th inst. discloses you as a see-er, a star performer of a séance with yourself as audience, *solus*. You appear to have been a shadow-dancer—the shadow your own.

You say you are glad I wrote you on the 24th ult., as you had been much alarmed on the 22d by seeing my spook at your gate. You ran from the veranda, where you had tarried after bidding good-night to some very late departing guests, and were enjoying the clear, brilliant light of the moon in mid-sky, and, with the soft south wind presaging a green Christmas, were longing for a "certain truant" to come home for a Christmas-

ing, when there, in full, palpable view, he stood! You say you "*ran* to meet *him*," and when you got to the gate he vanished away.

"The Snark was a Boogum, you see." You hastened to the gate, looked up and down the street, but he was nowhere. It is generally believed that what you saw was "another of those things no fellow can find out"—out of certain mysterious cabinets, though

"You may seek it with thimbles and seek it with care;

You may hunt it with forks and hope;

You may threaten its life with a railroad share;

You may charm it with smiles and soap."

And you did not faint! You simply leaned on the gate-post and said: "He is dead." You do not give me any of the post-mortem particulars—the garments of woe, heart-breakings, and so-forth; but it's gratifying to learn that my letter of the 24th ult. "was a glad relief."

I knew a little girl who, when it fell to her lot to wash the dishes, always sang with the most dolorous psalmistry that blasphemous

hymn-line: "I'm glad that I was born to die." She is not dead yet; but she never saw a spook! If you really want an explanation of my manifestation, I can only suspect: *I was there!* Yet it was "All in your eye, Betty Martin." Up there into the cortices of your gray matter "where is fancy bred," as I sat at the chapel door and saw the moon going down to you, my thought of you and myself at the gate of our parting projected itself, and (may I be pardoned for imagining) at the same time you had a vision of the same sadness: our thought of each other as we once stood there, united, and I was made exteriorly cognizable to you. You saw me present, as I was consciously thinking myself to be. So, you see, "*thoughts are things*," a mode of motion, between us? It was all on the wireless-telegraph system—finer and farther. It represents the idea of the near invention of the telephonic picture of the sender and receiver respectively appearing in response to the "Hi loo!" When our wills, consciously, are able to project our thoughts with our images to receptive waiting members of the New Telephone of Souls, call me up, please!

I told you of the Hermit and the lady at the chapel steps expecting sympathetic appreciation, but find you intimating a scandal. The whispered truth is scandalful.

I would not have believed it, you innocent Little Teacher! Here I have you, in black and white, a traitor to your sex! Or is it an overweening vanity of that same sex with which you write: "I knew there was 'a woman in it'!" Hurrah for her, I say! I wonder if it was really your prescience of facts or a mere Eve-itical instinct which disclosed to you that "there can be no hermit, pure and simple." Women have a sort of illusive intuition; for were not the Sibyls, the Delphines, the Vestals, all women? So much so that Woman has assumed to be "the divinity that stirs within us"—all sorts of de-dev-devotion! Instance: All our symbols—in fresco and statue, in park and palace, everywhere — of Industry, Art, Literature, Justice, Liberty, Peace, and—and *War*, are *Women*.

There is a fable that when the gods were making woman and were throwing the ingredients into the caldron, one inadvertently tossed in a soul—and thence came man's

toil and trouble. Blessings on the inconsequent young chap for his carelessness! For he must have been a youthful sport, intent on fun. Or may it have been an old 'un on mischief bent—throwing the chestnuts into the fire that we men might monkey with the cat to get them out? The widow of General Custer, in a lecture, said that during the Civil War she once was invited to the headquarters of the army to witness the distribution of medals to twenty soldiers for distinguished service. When the men were lined up to receive their decorations they would have passed muster as *so many pretty girls*, they were so young and so blushingly handsome; and, for acts, then and there narrated by the general commanding as each was given his insignia, of gay gallantry, reckless and loyal devotion, patient suffering, and intrepid deviltry, they *deserved* to be!

I wonder if between fable and fact there is any relation of sequence; if so, it certainly was the young chap!

You say your work is often labor, for as a Teacher you are, in law, in place of the parents, a parent-in-law—you must combine in one the most heterogeneous elements.

The "old woman who lived in a shoe" had her blessed privileges. You think that as the remedy for divorces is proposed to be in sensible marriage laws requiring physical examinations for degenerates, additionally there should be required of the would-be-happy couple certificates of qualification as nurses and kindergarten teachers; thus they would be qualified to stand *in loco parentis* themselves. I agree with you. I think that a person who has taught school for, say, about ten years, would be entirely eligible! How would it do to establish reformatories for incorrigible parents? Also, provide kindergartens for honeymooners and hospitals for divorcees?

I went to the Hermit with your difficulties in regard to rewards and punishments, which you seem to have difficulty in distributing in your school. You wish me to discover for you "the rod that chasteneth without chastising," and to tell you "how spoiled the rod should be to spare the child."

The Hermit never argues, never disputes. He listens and he talks; who am I to inter-locute? I stated your case, and then tried to have ears to hear, but I doubt if I shall

be able to lend them to you. He talked as if alone: "As a fact, I do not think God ever punishes. Punishment for sin is a misnomer—the invention of man. We see a consequence of what we call wrong-doing, and we say it is a reward or a punishment. There is neither reward nor punishment in God's purpose. In it there is only cause and effect—justice—justice inexorable. There is no escape from it. There is no such thing as mercy either—mercy in the sense of relief from the *effect* of wrong-doing on the doer. I know this is shocking to one who has regarded only man and his mode of government. Indeed, our legal punishments are not justice at all. You say: 'Let us temper justice with mercy.' Yes, let *us*. We are fallible: we do not know all. We administer justice like we do medicine—afflict the patient, hoping that Nature will hear the cry for help. Our penal statutes are hostile provisions for the safety of the social body, for the welfare of every other than the criminal. The so-called effect of sin against man's laws is artificial; it is not caused by but merely follows disobedience. We put a man in prison, or take his property from him, or kill him; it is

not even an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The punishment does not fit the crime, simply because we cannot create a natural effect from the artificial cause. Society, as such, is not responsible for the sins of men, save as the result of such sins hurts the whole or some member of the system. It is even deemed justifiable to inflict the severest penalties upon a culprit as an example to deter others from committing crime. This is the old idea of the scapegoat bearing the sins of the people into the wilderness—without consulting the goat or the wilderness! It is in line with the counsel of Caiaphas, the high priest, that it was 'expedient that one man should die for the people'; in accordance with which the Holy Nazarene was murdered, obsequious to the expediency of the law. Christ dealt with the individual. 'Love thy neighbor as thyself' is for the happiness of the loving, the effect on the neighbor is the incident. Until within a few years, before we had reformed the laws a little, if you saw a man judicially hanged by the neck, you could not say whether he had stolen, counterfeited the coin of the realm, smuggled a keg of brandy, rebelled against

the king, refused to attend church, or was a bigamist or a murderer. And now, if you visit a penitentiary, you cannot say of any convict there what offence he has committed. But, in nature, not a flower blooms or wind blows for which there is not a sure and adequate cause. It is easy, after the event, to say that Sodom and Gomorrah were punished by fire from heaven for Sin; but Christ said: 'Those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay.' It might as well be said of Pompeii and Herculaneum, that fires rained down from heaven and destroyed them as punishment for sin. We know they perished in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which had from time immemorial emitted flames and lava threatening them. They were pagan in all things of worship. They chose to live under a volcano and suffered the consequences. Let us not forget that there are ethical causes which may produce physical effects. The low, voluptuous worship of the Pompeians was one of the first nature-religions of man. Physical luxuriousness selected their place of abode, and

in sympathy with riotous nature they revelled in contiguity to the primeval, the passional heat of the fruitful slope of the burning mountain. Spiritual depravity and animal desire were associated with cosmic fertility and unrest. The good often escape; they heed warnings. There may be angels—moral forces—to warn the good; for goodness in its receptivity, its obedience to spiritual suggestion, is in the line of Godward progress. But natural causes produce natural effects, and a good man may die of apoplexy in his tribune. If he had been wise in knowledge of his disease he might have lived longer, and, probably, he had lived long by reason of his obedience to suggestion. Mere goodness does not change the laws of the universe, but by obeying them one has length of days. A man by taking thought may not add a *cubit* to his stature, but he may add an inch or two. While all I have heretofore said is true, you must know that there is a repentance and an obtaining mercy, in the sense that ceasing to do evil and learning to do good is obtaining mercy—is a coming into a non-sinful state. That man is able to repent, to turn from doing evil, is itself a mercy.

That one can turn Godward, can love his neighbor as himself, can love the Supreme, is a mercy. One may not escape the effect of past sinning by repentance, but that effect will be better borne; no more seed being sown, the harvest of evil will be cut short; and although tares may appear in the harvest, the wheat will be sufficient to rejoice in; besides, good is a more fertile seed than evil. It rains on the just and the unjust, but the just receive the gifts of God with fruit-bearing hands.

“This rule of cause and effect—this equal working of the laws of nature, the compensatory adjustment of all forces—does not shut out the fact (the law) that the wise may cause Nature to work effects by the use of her laws, as the smith heats the iron and hammers it into such shape as he wills. So Christ healed the sick; so, by the power of the law of faith, He survived the crucifixion. Nothing happens. Ignorance, knowing no law of expectancy, says: ‘It happens.’ Nor does the rule deny that ‘the prayer of the righteous availeth much,’ for the faith-begetting prayer of the righteous is a force, a dynamic force in nature. It stirs the vital

influences to healing. It is the telegraphic wire between the spirit of man and the forces in nature. Given the same faithful prayer by an equally righteous one, and the same result of healing will follow as an effect of the same cause. The mighty works of the prophets of old are not now seen simply because the prophets are not—are not seen? All this is but asserting the power of the spirit within man, the rule of the spiritual law over matter, to set in motion the forces of nature. What we now generally do is to drill the body and exercise the mind in order to feed and clothe the body. We invent wants, and spend our lives gratifying them. No wonder the prophets are not born of us. We breed cattle and kings, but not prophets or seers. We pray for riches and things of sense, which are to be worked for. The man who determines to be rich can be rich; the law gives him the pound of flesh, but the life of the Spirit is not his. We can and do sow for riches and harvest them; they perish with the using, but there is a sowing of wise endeavor and joy which enricheth with the using."

When my old friend had ceased, I asked

him: "What of one's past sins? What is one to do with them?"

With a look of utter weariness, he answered: "Sins? There are sins and sins! Whatever they are, coddle them not, nor bedevil them. 'Go and sin no more,' and, by all means, go! Bandage your bruised feet and—forget them! Displace the thou-shalt-nots of Moses with the affirmations of Christ! Don'ts are rocks of stumbling—they suggest offence, as 'the strength of sin is the law.'"

Don't you think my Seer is correct in holding that Society should exist only for the protection of its members—for self-preservation, not for vengeance? Percival Lowell has said that "politeness is the social art of living agreeably with one's fellows." The criminal must be taught politeness. If he cannot love his neighbor as himself, he, at least, must not be disagreeable; if he won't be polite, he must be restrained from evil until he learns to do good, although Society cannot compel him to *be* good: for, after all, he must *punish* himself. It is said: "The suicide is one who meets his executioner and slays him." Every man must meet his besetting sin and starve it to death. The preacher ends his sermon with

an "application," the fabulist with a moral; one criminal I know of is a prisoner of Capri, trying to reform himself; but the more he tries, the more he is beset; the more he starves, the hungrier he is. Please pardon the personal application and forego the moral, for I am afraid to meet my executioner—lest she slay me. I fear, however, that my sin has found me out (in the sense of discovery, not escape), when in your last note you say: "Men have said they loved me, and some I believed." It is a satisfaction to know that you have not, with Job, said in your heart that "*all* men are liars." That "*some*" may cover a multitude of sinners, "*of whom I am chief.*" I merely quote St. Paul and demand the proof, for I never have said it, yet—? However, I was troubled when you added: "I have had a bitter disappointment." There you stop! Don't you think, this time, that it is you who should "explain yourself"? I have read that sentence over so often that, in my colloquies with my Hermit, when I tried to listen, so as to write you of what you style "*his religions*" (you seem to think he has several), I have become a disappointment myself. I resent anything which is a

cause of pain to *you*. If any person has disappointed you, I shall certainly doubt if my Seer is correct in his views of punishment. My politeness, too, has its limit. Your trust is not sufficiently alive to impel you to confide your trouble to me, as of old. I have sinned and come short of the high calling of friendship, or something, which used to make a partnership of our hopes, fears, and trials. It cannot be that your Mr. Call is a disappointment—although the bitterness of him I have had reason to know. You cannot have failed as the Little Teacher—that is impossible. I try to think you have exaggerated something trivial, which to your sensitive conscience is a mountain; but you are not given to misjudge. It is all a puzzle—a puzzle! I can only wait, and hope I also serve. Meanwhile, to cease from troubling, I shall earnestly devote myself to learn all I can from the lips of my philosopher and friend; although your “bitter disappointment” has caused me to feel that Tom Moore’s lines,

“Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish,

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal,”

desires, passions, which cry out to be satisfied. We are prone to sacrifice; proud to vanity to be able to give, since giving implies in us a surplus of riches. We "want to be doing something in the world" in the order of inherited nature—to obey the sentence of the law adjudged on Adam, as an effective, not a punishment, for his disobedience: for "in Adam's fall we sinned all."

By-the-way, according to the account, Adam was no gentleman; he was the first cad. He told tales out of school; he kissed and told, and, if the truth were known, he doubtless lied! The Nazarene, it is said, was "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." He was the first in quality—the Spiritual Aristocrat; Prince of All the Humanities. The first gentleman of the Old Testament, in point of time, was Abimelech, a king of the Philistines, who dwelt in Gerar.

How to reverse the judgment visited on our first parents has been a world's puzzle. Some have kicked against the goads and broke the entail by a common recovery, have voluntarily abdicated manhood and womanhood to escape, have side-stepped to avoid the blow, and are saints! Yet the vestal mother

of Romulus and Remus was buried alive, and "nephews" have been numerous. Single-blessedness in such case was the failure; yet marriage is declared by some socialists to be a monopoly! The latter seem to seek some indeterminate-sentence method to modify the judgment for Adam's fall. Had we not better seek a reversal of the transgressive force of our first progenitors by the generation of a second Spiritual Adam; and so find a compensation, if not a satisfaction? Can we not take the consequences and rejoice in it? Can't we Adamites eat our bread in the sweat of our brows and joy in the work, and you Eveites bear the children of mated true-love, not the offspring of convenience or of the fierce cries of Edenic desire, and so breed temples for souls?

You have heard the song of the seventeen-year locust, the Cicada? The egg-child falls, a speck of down, from its cradle in the tender branch of the tree, its orphanage home, and burrows far into the ground, where it summers and winters itself as a worm, and then a beetle, until seventeen years have passed. Then on the very day, the hour appointed, through all the under-world the prophesied

reveille summons from under every green tree in the land the now armored host of Cicadæ to arise and fight its battle up to sunshine and the renewal of its race. It marches, assaults, and storms the barricading earth walls and is in Eden! There it hangs its spears and shields on the rough bark of the trees, emerges from its coat of mail—a legion of winged Cupids, an army of Amorites.

Embowered on every leafy twig the troubadour serenades the lady of his love, until the forest resounds with the palpitating refrain:

“I live for love, for love I die.”

He tarries with her a few days, and then

“The shrilling locust slowly sheathes
His dagger voice and creeps away
Beneath the brooding leaves where breathes
The zephyr of the dying day,”

and with it dies.

His lady-love lays her eggs in the nest-cradle carved by her in the tender twigs of the tree, and, having fulfilled the law by giving her life that the Cicadæ shall not perish from the earth, she also dies. The

Cicada has been transmitted for another life-round. Within forty-two days from the moment of the sortie of the army of crusaders in the cause of the life more abundantly not a martyr remains, and the grove is silent once more — silent for another seventeen years.

“Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many *Cicadæ*.” *For Psyche is thine.*

If man—Man!—has arisen from the dust to become the prince of all animal life, to hold in his hands the power of life and death over all animate things, is there not in him a higher destiny yet in the eternal progress of Life? Must he be satisfied with the gratification of the animal impulse to “multiply and replenish”? True it is that nature has spread all its decoys to allure and its nets to capture every amorous Cupid. The humblest flower as well as the proudest oak puts forth innumerable germs of life to reproduce other flowers, other oaks; the very stones do “cry out to raise seed to Abraham.” Nature runs to seed-bearing. Every sense is appealed to and seems to have been evolved for the purpose of embodying life. Pollen and stigmata

call to each other; the lions of the mountain roar; the vegetable invites the animal and the mineral the vegetable world to assist; every atom in the universe runs to and fro in an agony of motion: all seeking life more abundantly.

Yet shall Man remain King of Beasts only? After all, is not this inbred impulse, desire, passion to perpetuate, a corollary to the universal law of the persistence of force, and argues an inherent impulsion toward everlasting existence?

What are you not doing in the world? The young woman, through her instinct of unexpended motherhood, is the natural teacher of children, while man teaches from his propensity for mastery. In the appeal of helpless childhood to the sympathies of woman is the birth of altruism; and now, when the schoolmaster is abroad, it is the schoolmistress who is at home. She is discovering herself—the *quasi* mother of the great hereafter.

It is Inazo Nitobe, who, in his *Bushido; or, Soul of Japan*, says: "When character and not intelligence, when the soul and not the head, is chosen by a teacher for the ma-

terial to work upon and develop, his vocation partakes of a sacred character. 'It is the parent who has borne me; it is the teacher who makes me man.'"

I know of a boy with his diploma from the University, who, when asked by his father, a minister of the Gospel, what he had chosen for his life-work, answered: "Father, I can't make a minister out of myself." To which the reverend gentleman, laying his hand on his boy's head, replied: "Ah, no, my son; it is *God* who makes ministers of the Gospel."

So it is of a woman-teacher, who, with pure, exalted ideals of being and living, hears the cry of the coming need and stress of her people, with Jephtha's daughter, answers: "Here am I, a willing sacrifice," and denies her personal self in fulfilling the answer. Such was once your intrepid answer, while here am I, pedicled to "the wandering foot."

There is no altruism in fact, for in the scales of nature there are compensations against every deprivation. Yet can there be any greater self-denial for a woman to forego than the inherited demand of motherhood that she may minister to the crying needs of virtually parentless children—children whose

future, and the future of Society as well, depend upon the self-denying care of the teacher in the public schools? And, if foregoing the personal longing to love and be loved by one alone, there must come to that teacher the satisfaction of having done something in the world, of having entered into the loving life of hundreds of her pupils, who shall rise up and call her blessed? The teacher rocks the cradle of the future of her people. The true-born teacher has heard the coming, coming heralds of her nation's progress, and all the babes of promise leap within her at the sound of their announcing bugles. With Zeph, the old black seer, she cries: "The blood ansahs; I'se bawn with a caul! I'se bawn with a caul!"

I hope you will pardon me for giving that significance to the concluding sentence of your last letter which its occultness deserves. Let me repeat it: "Please don't trouble yourself about 'your Mr. Call.' 'Speak for yourself, John.'" Now, it strikes me that "your Mr. Call" (forgive the mention of him by me this last time) is set upon a pedestal, a dodo on a consecrated altar dedicated to silence. In the awed hush of your worship

of his saintship his is the "lost name"—unutterable by my profane lips. You mean that I, wicked, must cease from troubling and give him (and you) a rest. I am to speak for *myself*, as I am no prophet for your most high and mighty sacredness, your little tin god! Your meaning is plain, though under covert of the quotation-marks to screen the rebuke. You omit from the quotation the present *inquisitive*, "Why don't you?"—preferring the imperative to suit your mood. Although I accord you all the graces, purity, and loveliness of Priscilla, I have not the courage to be as modest as John Alden. You never, never (were you?) so impatient with me, and I, no doubt, deserved to be—to be—reprimanded! Well, in your heaven this wicked one shall cease from troubling, and in my Capri the weary shall be at rest—I hope. I shall try to be content with the memory of our dear old companionship of thought and sympathy—the communion of the saints, one of whom I always hold you, though I am far from being another, except under your halo.

In the case at bar I have a client, but, though I have always fought to the last ditch

for my clients, now an ancient maxim of the legal profession warns against a foolish championship of his cause by *me*; therefore let me flee to the mountain, to my dear old Hermit, and to that ever-fond kinship with you in things spiritual which hallows my rest.

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *March 7, 190-*.

MY DEAR _____:

* * * * *

I am sorry if anything in my last letter offended you—you do not mention my outbreak against the nameless one; and that is ominous (I might say “omni-ous”), for your letter, now before me, seems as if cut short by a frost. But frosted cake is all the sweeter, and the sweetness of your cake is in your inquiry: “When are you coming home?” The inference is that I *should* come, though you assign no reason why. There is only one reason which could appeal to me, and that is too unreasonable for me to think of.

“In *Capri*’s land I’ll take my stand,
And live and die in *Capri*!”

For I find this hospitable southland is most interesting—to me. Though it is of stone, its heart is mysteriously tender. It has had its tragedy, even in later times. It is said that, in a raid by a band of Saracens from across the narrow sea, some years ago, when it landed to rob, and to rapt the fair women for their harems and the children for the Tunisian slave-market, the inhabitants, as of old, sought the security of the cavern under the old castle on Castiglione. The cavern, or grotto, is approached by a foot-wide path along the face of a bare cliff several hundred feet above the sea, where one person at the entrance of the cave has only to push the intruder a hand’s-breadth to hurl him down the abyss. Most of the people had made their entry into safety, when one young man at the beginning of the path tarried to ward off the pursuers from a beautiful young woman who was about to enter the narrow passage. He chivalrously held them at bay until “Heloise” escaped into the cavern, but her defender and rescuer himself fell victim,

overpowered by numbers, and was left mangled and for dead on the mountain-side.

Whether or not this incident has any relation to my "little story" of the organist and the lady, I will repeat what my informant said: "We know very little, suspect a great deal, guess at some things." While I cannot ask my Hermit, for there is about him a silent forbidding of personalities as too trivial for consideration, yet I believe—I dream, perhaps—that my saintly friend who so bravely champions Psyche would not hesitate to face an army of Saracens in defence of a woman.

During this same raid a little shoemaker was pegging his way up the steeps toward the cavern when overtaken by the raiders, and was by them carried oversea a prisoner. His bereaved wife, with her "nine small children and one at the breast," pleaded with the good church people of Capri to ransom him. In a year or two the money was sent, and the son of Crispin was returned and received with joy and fatted chickens. He seemed pleased with his reception, and, in his character as Munchausen, he reflected honor on the original until he began to believe

his own fairy tales, was reduced to the neck of the chickens, and was "on his uppers"—to speak professionally. Alas, one morning he was missing! He had learned the trick. He had "folded *his* tent like the Arabs and as *silently stole* away"—to get his share of the ransom and rejoice his two Saracen wives, fulfilling the adage of his trade: "Let the shoemaker stick to his last."

Notwithstanding the pie-crustian shortness of your last note (you had "no time to write a letter"), yet it was long on recondite inquiries. You "wish to know what the Hermit means by saying that the resurrection of Christ was a proof of the essential quality of the Spirit, the Spiritual Soul—the Christ within us"; and you also "wish to learn what he knows of the relation of the Spirit to the Animal-Man." Yet I have been hinting that yours was a short note!

Although I cannot question my Aged One about his younger life, I have continued to inquire, and he has continued to respond, concerning the life spiritual in which he is almost wholly absorbed, and from time to time his responses have fallen into the lines which I have tried to remember, and in

which I hope you will find, in some sort, a solution of the problems you present. To begin with, the other evening he made a résumé of the whole subject of matter and spirit. I was glad to listen, and now am the more so, because it may help *you* as an answer to your note of inquiries.

He began: "What is mind? The simplest exposition is, that Mind is a result. Thought is born of the Spirit and Matter. Given the Spirit and the Animal-Man, the former acting in and upon, or, as some say, overshadowing the latter, engenders an activity of perception, cognition, with consequent association of the informations obtained, by comparison, contrast, reasoning; and thus man has a mind, memory, knowledge. Mind thus becomes the instrument through which the soul takes cognizance of things, experiments with matter. It is the antennæ with which the soul seeks nutriment.

"So our thoughts are born. They depend upon the heredity both of our overshadowing spirit and of our bodies. We may escape the easy, indolent following of the mere animal desires by giving the lead to the spirit, developing the consciousness of it, bringing it

by a life of work and faith to be an ever-abiding presence within, so that it becomes no longer an 'overshadowing,' an 'over-soul,' but an active 'Christ within us, the hope of glory'; an existing quality—not quantity—of Eternal Life. Denying Fate, we weave our Destiny—the certain final effect of efficient causes.

"Our destiny is in our own hands, if we have the *will* to do our Master's will. The Spirit ever stands at the door and knocks. Conscience is the latch. Every one can open the door by lifting the latch—if he *will*. Jesus—the exemplified Christ for us—stood among us, divine in and because of the perfection of the Spirit. In this He was at one with the Supreme, with God. The perfect Spirit is the Only—not the only thing, for spirit, although it is a substance, is no thing in the popular terms of matter—the 'Only Begotten Son of God.' It is the 'Man in Our Image.' To utterly quench this Spirit, put out its lighting fire, is to 'die the death'; to abjure, to deny this Spirit—this whole, perfect Spirit, this whole, Holy Ghost within us—is to strive against and destroy the eternizing principle of our present life, and

it leaves us to go on in a purely human-animal existence, with the Spirit grieved, though present ceasing to strive with us; and, finally, when physical death comes—or even before—the Spirit ‘returns to God who gave it.’ The Soul has committed suicide. ‘And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; unto him who blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.’ In such a case, what becomes of the result of the connection of such a spirit and such a rejecting human-animal? There must be some effect caused by such a connection—the life lived, the body of desire, the personality.

“The man-animal has lived, has been a person, has had an animal-soul, and, so far as the Spirit has been resident, the beginnings of a human-soul. This animal-soul must have an existence hereafter, for it is a something; memory and remains of reason belong to it, but it is a shell—the Spirit, the eternal fire divine, having been trampled out. It thereafter is an insane person babbling of illusion, a person obsessed of the past, possessed of a demon—his own.

“To that incorrigible is reserved the

'second death,' the condition and effect of the 'sin against the Holy Ghost.' The quality of continuing, which gives eternal life, repudiated, has withdrawn itself. Such a personality may linger long among the shades by the river Styx, but having no obolus to pay Charon, the ferryman, he wanders maundering on the shore. He is of those dead, according to St. John, to be 'cast into the lake of fire; this is the second death.' Even in this life he is like the Church at Sardis, to whom it was said: 'I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.' But of the human-soul, attaching itself to and so being eternized by the Spirit that quickeneth, the savor of life unto life, it is said: 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death.' To him who overcometh his desires for the enjoyment of the pleasure of sense as the end and purpose of this present life, who uses all things, without abusing any, as a means of clothing the spirit with the experiences of this life, enriching it with loving action, all things are given, even eternal life. Spirit is that quality of the Life of the Universe, which is from the beginning—the everlasting.

The destiny of man is to become of that quality. As there is no annihilation of substance—only change of its forms—it follows that *whatever* is, *was and shall be*. It is for man to acquire the everlasting form, to gather the immortelle from the gardens of God. If the animal-man develops, acquires, or attains to a spiritual-soul, which is of what may be called the divine quality capable of surviving without change of form—a Son-of-Man become a Son-of-God—the mortal will have ‘put on immortality,’ the everlasting substance of life will have been absorbed, assimilated, by the man, and he will become individually everlasting. The Son-of-David, descended of a Kingly strain, of a peculiar people, was doubtless one among millions in bodily perfection—a fit temple for the indwelling of the Spirit of all Life. It was objected by the Pharisees that He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. This was after His body had been cleansed by the trials in the wilderness and perfected for the indwelling of the Spirit by its thirty years’ apprenticeship. His body became a temple through all the portals of which His Spiritual Soul shone in the splendor of the trans-

figuration. He so overcame bodily conditions that all men looking up to Him may feel that kin-throb of the divine Spirit of Life, may become conscious of heirship with Him to eternal life, and be free from the desires of the flesh by the inbreeding of that Spirit! It is this Spirit of all Life which is the 'Lamb slain from the foundations of the world' by being embodied in flesh; which was in-breathed 'in the beginning,' triumphing over its environment, arising from the ceremonies of burial, overcoming the illusions of manifested creation, resurrected a Redeemer; which in its perfection in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord we must seek, and, having found, shall no more see death. Why did the Spirit descend into matter? Why this mystery of redemption 'into which the angels desired to look'? If we, 'become as little children,' may make so great questionings; inquire into the genesis of man; seek to discover why the Only Begotten—the Spirit—should be subjected to the created Adam, and why the involution of the Spirit into matter should include an evolution of the Spirit out of matter, we shall enter the never-ending spiral of the circle which in-

volves an evermore seeking for more life, and shall approach Him not knowing what manner of man we shall finally become, but assured as we do approach we shall be like unto Him. The divine order on earth, first natural then spiritual, resolves all things back as substantial Spirit—the Logos—though, as St. Paul says, ‘with much groanings of the Spirit making intercession for the creature.’ The ray of the Spirit strikes the prism of this life, is refracted and separated into its constituent colors, adorning the tearful sky of earth for the time, yet gathering all to itself ‘when the storm of life is past.’

“However hypotheses may differ as to whether any particular soul existing in the body came as a direct special emanation, or creation, from God into that particular body; or came through successive reincarnations from such a direct, though incipient, original emanation; or is an evolution from the principle of life force universally infused into all matter, and at last, by progressive experiences, working its spiral way upward to Him—the Living Head—finally to become a conscious, living, Spiritual-Soul, we may rest—italicizing according to the light received—with the

written: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' When he shall so become, shall he not be able to breed a strain of everlasting son-souls? The effect of 'Adam's fall' may cite us to the cause and light us to the remedy. The flood of generation from Adam is turned back by the regeneration of the Spirit, as manifested in the Christ. Sin is generic. To be 'born in sin,' to be 'totally depraved,' is to be subject to the flesh—to the material—to be unregenerate. The development and realization in consciousness of the Spirit is a redemption from the flesh, a 'growth in grace,' an involution of the Christ in man. In the spiritual-soul is the quality of eternal life, and in it resides the potency of all things. Redemption from sin is the acquirement of the quality—the condition—of non-sinning; it is the 'new birth' by the regeneration of the Spirit in man. This quality of Eternal Life is of individual experience, to be sought with patient obedience and courage. It is a state of being. Will must join with desire and aspiration to achieve it. It is a gift from above,

but its reception and realization in consciousness is upon condition of earnest personal seeking—'knock and it shall be opened.' Simon, the sorcerer, could not purchase it. This individual responsibility to seek it cannot be shirked or shared. Neither custom nor fashion, authority nor servitude, can divest the right or absolve from the duty of every one to strive for individual everlasting life. The acquirement of the quality of not sinning may be called the 'state of holiness'; as the personal consciousness of the incoming of the spirit may be termed 'conversion'—'the new birth.' While heaven is a state of condition, not a place, what makes it is the quality of the inhabitant. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.' Nature, with man a part, climbs without haste, irresistibly sure, to complexity, the final step embracing all before. There is naught in the Universe which is not in Man—its epitome, its microcosm.

"The Egyptian conceived the idea of the irresistible force of the Spirit of Life when he set up the Sphinx—'the Champion Spirit of the World,' 'with calm, eternal eyes gazing straight on,' and with nourishing breasts—

a symbol of the persistence and fruitfulness of that Force.

“Every atom of the Universe, subject to the Spirit of Life, has an intelligent purpose, adapting itself to its environment, pursuing that purpose in the way of least resistance. That intelligent purpose progressively becomes instinct, and, by heredity, perpetuates itself, with increasing tendencies as intelligence accumulates, the fittest for the environment surviving. As instinct meets obstacles in its subservience to the persistence of force, endeavoring to obey this law of its being, reason is the result and reward. Thereupon in his progress animal-man reaches up to and embraces Psyche, the soul, as his help-mate toward immortality.

“As Psyche develops by experience with man, the time comes when she may exist alone, without the cruder grossness of flesh and blood as an informer and interpreter, and, with the spiritual body as her habitat, seek an ethereal home. Can we conceive a higher intelligence than that force which pervades all matter—the divine wisdom in the Life of the Universe?

“Why should not this Life be aggregated in

the highest complexity of matter, man? And, if it should be, why may not man become conscious of its indwelling force and use it to discover and forward his own spiritual progress as an individual entity, to attain and be of the quality of eternal life—to be an everlasting immortal? And when he shall become and be such, why should he not be an intelligent force, as a radium of light, an electron permeating matter? Nor would it be in derogation of the possession by man of such immortality that he should finally deny to himself further entry into human life on earth, or to anew his experiences of the unrealities of material life, but should prefer to become a Spiritual Sphinx! To such an immortalized man life and death would be only changes of environment.

“It is a function of such a soul to exist without the human body as well as within it. While the body is habitable the soul has the possible power of egress and ingress, and by means of that vehicle, by some called the astral body, it may assume bodily shape and presence without as well as when resident in the body.

“Where was Christ during the burial of His body? He, his spiritual-soul, was ‘preaching to the souls in bondage.’ That highest spiritual potency manifest in Jesus, the Christ, was in Him an embodied entity, being of the essential quality of Eternal Life. It was something, a resident, incorporeal *substance*. It existed on earth while His body was in the sepulchre—apart from yet of the body. It went into the middle under-world, Hades; into Hades, the world of spirits, where souls bound by affection for those yet living, where souls filled with the unsatisfied passions of life, where souls released from their bodies by untimely death through disease, accidental or suicidal violence—sent into Hades ‘half made up,’ have not entered into their rest nor yet desire to enter therein, and so are ‘in prison’; maybe, in course of purgation; to these the liberated Christ, the Spiritual personage, as a celestial presence, preached. He descended into hell—Hades—and ‘loosed those which were bound,’ not to return to earth but to pass forward. He held the keys of both death and Hades. Lazarus went through the gate of death, but not of Hades. When the stone was rolled

away from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus went 'before them into Galilee,' as He had told His disciples and Mary; and it is questionable whether His body of flesh ever after its entombment was seen by His disciples. His public work, His work for the ages was finished. Upon the cross He had yielded up His life on earth with a recitative of the opening cry of that singularly appropriate scripture, the twenty-second Psalm: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' That Psalm, if read to its triumphant conclusion, vindicates His quotation from despair. While filled with the woes of the crucifixion, it was an adoption of the Psalm as a prophecy, a last testament of His own character and final victory. Afterward, in the garden, Mary did not recognize Him. To the two disciples, with Him in a walk of threescore furlongs to Emmaus, though their hearts burned within them as He talked by the way, He was not known save, at last, in the breaking of bread. Then 'their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.' The same evening, in Jerusalem, He appeared to the disciples, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, and the disciples,

though terrified, recognized the Lord. A visitation was made by Him in like manner a week later. It was His speech which made Him known to them. At the sea of Tiberias, whither He went 'before them into Galilee,' He was not at first recognized. Upon the Mount of Ascension He ascended—disappeared in the air—'in the clouds of heaven.' These manifestations as such were substantial. The idea that they were merely the visions of self-deluded and credulous persons is as chimerical as the phenomena doubted. Must it not have been His phantasm, simulacrum, double, bodiless body, astral body—the spiritual body, under the control of His own conscious spirit, walking, speaking, eating even, substantially flowing out of His body of flesh and blood—of the whereabouts of which body conjecture has no facts to present. Between the several separate times when He manifested Himself we have no account of Him whatever. St. John always speaks of His appearances after the burial as manifestations, revealings, of Himself.

"Light is a force in motion; we do not see its shine save as its rays are obstructed in their progress and reflected; so spirit, which is a

formless force, to be visible, must come in contact with, or invest, some material object.

“As the imponderables, heat, electricity, magnetism, are resolvable into each other, are correlatives, there must be a matrix of them all, out of which they are differentiated by vibration—a mother of many children, a complexity of one in which they all reside. So it must be that there is a force of life behind all motion, a life that vibrates through all the Universe. In the vibrations of that force of life is the telegraph of souls—in and out of the body. May not the blood be vitalized by that force in motion, and that force be the thing which makes the difference between the living and the dead? He who has the power to put that force in motion may act as a battery and evolve and transmit it, ‘For whether it is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go into thy house.’ Disease, the consequence and the burden of transgression (sin), the hireling of death, is the changing of the form of life, not its activity. The decay of one

form is the insurgence of another—a change in the direction of force, a transformation of motion. This constant progression of forms is the recurrent sowing and harvest—Saturn devouring his children. The scenes are shifted, the play—the play goes on. Each scene is prolonged until the part it localized is fully played out. Rest is but the coming into equilibrium with the environment; and motion is only motion by relation. Up and down are not opposed to each other. The balloonist is not conscious of moving as he rests on the bosom of the wind, except as he observes the earth beneath or the clouds about him. All earthly objects appear to rest as they yield to and are at one with the force which carries the earth in its orbit. Gravitation is the seeking for harmony with the motion of force. The harmony of nature is the unity of direction of force. The resistance of the air to force is the cause of its vibration as sound; the air is not the vehicle of force to carry sound: it is the resistance of the air to force which causes the vibration known as sound. Behind all motion lies force—the Divine Energy. It may well be imagined that the various forms of force must

be conserved in one, of which they are but part and into which they may be resolved. Each atom ceaselessly whirls within its sphere; the earth revolves about the sun, and the sun advances in step with a multitude of other suns on his grand round, followed by his courtier suite. May not it yet be found that the activities of all are as one, the mode of motion of the atom in its ratio the same with the shining hosts of the firmament? It must be in the small as in the great. To find it is to unveil the Infinite Force, 'that Power, outside ourselves, which makes for righteousness.' Sin is want of conformity to that Force. So love is the gravitation of souls—toward God.

"As it is the hinted suggestion of modern science that all matter may be resolved into one element, it is but a sequence that it is the evolution, the out-breathing, of an initial Force—the One. If electricity is life, does it think? No, the Smith is behind the hammer. Thought is a force which can project a vibration. The Thinker is the god in the machine.

"All things are possible to the Spirit of Life—this out-breathed Force—to be excited

to motion through man by Faith. 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain: Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; nothing shall be impossible unto you.' Such faith must be a force capable of exciting atomic action. May not atomic vibration be awakened by the will of the spiritual minded?

"Ordinarily we do not distinguish between opinion, belief, and faith. Opinion is tentative; asserting a fact to be upon the known evidence, but with an implied reservation of final decision upon newly discovered evidence. Belief rests upon the known evidence with a conclusive finding that there is no other variant, and this belief regulates conduct. Belief, in the sense in which Jesus employed it, has been defined to be 'that judgment of the human soul which vindicates the absolute verity of a suggestion; that condition of the fully enlightened soul which unhesitatingly recognizes such verity.' Prayer, by a person's concentrated contemplation of and appeal to the Supreme, is a means of lifting the soul into spiritual condition—one of the mind's athletics whereby the soul is prepared for insight, for strength, for help to believe,

through which faith may be obtained. There must be a consciousness of power in a man possessed of faith. It is the man who has received faith—the divine efflux of the Spirit of Life, the ‘God in us’—who may remove the mountain.

“‘As a man thinketh, so he is.’ The thoughts of God; who can think them? They are manifest in matter—as above, so below; on earth as it is in heaven, in the small as in the great.

“Only as we are fitted *by condition*, so can we receive; and as we are able, so we *shall* receive. ‘Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him’—that is, the unused capacity to have.

“Knowledge of the truth ‘cometh not by observation.’ It is the gift of the Spirit. A kernel of wheat may lie for thousands of years in an Egyptian pyramid, and when taken out may germinate and grow to a harvest. So may a soul in its fruition of this life lie in Hades, and, retaining a fertilization of the divine Spirit of Life, in the ages, come forth into growth again upon the earth and begin anew its spiral climb to everlasting life.

Ignorance is the home of the supernatural. There is nothing supernatural to the wise."

My Hermit is not a priest, nor is he a preacher. He's simply a thinker for thinking's sake, and a meditative talker. I put a question or two touching your inquiries, and out of the quaint fulness of his thought there springs the flow of words which I have pitched from time to time and now pour out to you, until I am afraid you have dropped your cup from utter weariness.

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *March* 20, 190-.

MY DEAR _____:

I see the dawning smile which ushers the awaiting dimple in your cheek, as you read of my enthusiasm for my dear Hermit, when you remember the

"Waltzes, polkas, lancers, reels, and glides,
Highland, schottische, quadrille, gallops, slides,
... How we danced them all!"

Oh, how we swam and swirled with the swing of the violin in *valse bleu*!

"And it's all over now." . . . ? I am glad if you do remember, and if the smile shall ripple into glad, gay laughter when you think of the good times

"O' Life! we've *had* long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather."

But I hope it shall be ages before "in some brighter clime I shall bid *you* good-morning!"

You say that "at least the influence of the Ancient will teach *me* reverence for grave matters, if one is to believe what he says about the resurrection." There, I see Cupid's bow pouted over Little Teacher's firm under lip as it closes over "grave matters." The earnestness of that straight guardian nose above bids me pause. If we really do believe in the life of the Spiritual-Soul apart from the body in an ascended Christ, why not be cheerful about "one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams"? Why always be going "*down* to the grave," or be going to "the

undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns"? For death "was not spoken of the soul," and "the grave is not its goal." As my Ancient says, "There is no up or down; it's all God!" What is the use of our tossing up the dirt in our road that we may walk in the falling dust? "Pray, and in everything give thanks!" "Joy in tribulation," as a means if not a reward for well-doing; and know that we are in the world to stay and see it out! Why should we not run rejoicing as the sun of the morning than loiter with that Dolly Varden nun of the skies, "pale for weariness of climbing heaven"? "The laughter of man is the contentment of God!" The dying Irishman who, when asked by his friend whether the mourners should drink the wake-whiskey going to or coming from the cemetery, answered, "Whin goin', for I'll be wid ye thin," had a better comprehension of grave affairs than those lugubrians who are never so happy as when they are miserable, and who dote on the time when "the mourners go about the street and the grinding is low." The theological student who, when requested by his professor to give the exegesis of St. Paul's exclamation, "Now

death is swallowed up in victory," said, "There are two lessons to be drawn—one patent, the other inferred: one that death is swallowed *up* in victory, and the other that it is swallowed *down*." You have your choice!

"Oh, bold blue sky! Oh, keen glad wind!
I wonder me if this may be?
That some fair day, leaving life behind,
Our eyes shall view new land, new sea,
So exquisite that, lo! with thrilling breath,
We shall laugh loud for very joy of death."

We will learn, "some sweet day," how to die as we now go to sleep; we will know, also, how to awake—and when! And this will be when we undoubtingly know

"That life is ever Lord of death,
And love can never lose its own."

The face of the comfortably dead is wonderful for its peacefulness, its "strange aloofness and preoccupation."

"Death smoothes the wrinkles of the past, and, somewhat
. . . reveals the child forgot."

I doubt if my Hermit has given as clear a definition of faith as this, stated by St. Paul: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." Hope expresses both desire and expectation. You may desire, yet not expect. To expect you must have a basis of facts from experience sufficient to remove doubt from the mind, and this, with desire, is a reasonable ground for "things hoped for"; so, to have faith to heal or to remove mountains, you must also have in yourself the *substance* of things hoped for—the *power* to do so, which is "the *evidence* of things unseen"; without that you cannot *expect* to *do* anything.

I suspected you would be surprised by my old friend's matter-of-fact treatment of the resurrection of our Lord. The truthfulness of the appearances to the disciples is shown by the ingenuousness of their narration, upon the assumption by them that the spiritual-soul may exist and be visible in the spiritual-body. He was dead by all the common tests of the time, but the power of resurrection was in the vitalizing energy of His will, which operated as a force to revive tissue. He had asserted His ability to rebuild the temple

of His body in three days; it was rebuilt between Friday evening and that Sunday dawn when He came forth from the tomb, to the terror and stupefaction of His Roman guard, which had been posted at the sepulchre to prevent His disciples carrying His body away by night. He, in His crucified body, went before them into Galilee. He could not in safety have been seen by the Jews of Jerusalem, for the decree of death would not have been satisfied.

Many modern instances of both living and of recently dead persons projecting their "appearances" to a distance and being recognized and conversed with have been proved. There is a very old and famous tapestry in the Galleria of the Arazzi in the Vatican which pictures the appearance of Jesus to His disciples as a "shade." This shows that the artist who designed the tapestry sought to revive the idea conveyed by the New Testament. When Jesus appeared to His disciples in Galilee, St. Matthew relates that "when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted"; and St. John writes of the same event: "And none of the disciples durst ask Him, 'Who art

Thou?’ knowing that it was the Lord.” Both St. Matthew and St. John convey the idea of timorous apprehension on the part of the disciples at the sight of the appearance. There was no such wonder, fear, or doubt at the grave of Lazarus, or in the house of Jairus, or in the street of the city of Nain, when the dead were raised. He was not recognized as an actual flesh-and-blood man, but appeared with all the semblance of one, and invited the disciples to identify Him as such, and not as a mere ghost of the imagination, when He came in unto them in Jerusalem, “the doors being shut.”

You say: “If He appeared to His disciples as a mere shade, it takes all the force from the idea of the resurrection.” But if it was an intelligent “shade”—the house of His mind, soul, the Spiritual-Soul in the Spiritual-Body—does not that prove the existence of the mind, the soul, apart from the flesh-and-blood body, as an existing entity resurgent from the common clay, and justifies your faith in the Christ as ever living? This Imperial Personage whose teachings, moral and ethical, are absolute edicts for all time, is and through the ages shall be a Spiritual Pres-

ence ever living, preaching to all Souls in Bondage.

You do not suppose that Jesus in His body of flesh and blood ascended? The material flesh-and-blood body of the son of Mary was not the Christ of your hope. That He was able to manifest Himself on earth as a living Soul without that body is the proof of the immortality of that Soul.

You are becoming a real theologian when you follow up your first interrogatory by a Socratican other: "If it be true that it was the 'spiritual-body' which ascended into the heavens, what becomes of the resurrection of the earth-body?" Let St. Paul answer:

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; *it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* So also it is written, The first Adam became a living

Soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."

So far as I am concerned, I don't care; earth to earth, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes with my body, so that I save my Soul. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." When Titus burned to ashes the Temple at Jerusalem, and the blood of the brave and only death-conquered Jews ran in floods about the Holy of Holies, it is said that, above the turmoil and roar of battle and flame, strange voices were heard in the air, sorrowful yet fateful: "Let us go hence."

You further say: "Your Hermit does not admit or affirm that he has ever lived in the flesh on earth before his present incarnation. If he affirms it, what reason has he to know it? Does he remember?"

No, he has neither admitted nor affirmed; yet he evidently believes that he has. I think this because of his firm assertion of his belief in the fact of the reincarnation and progress of souls. If he did admit or affirm, what conclusive proof would that be to you or me? We would not rest content upon the word of belief even of so good and sincere a man;

we must have proof—something tangible to our reasonable intelligence; and he fully realizes the futility of such a mere expression. I might answer your question by asking: How would he give you such proof? How could you verify his experience? No doubt he feels many suggestions foreign to all his experiences in this life which determine his intuitive loves and his hates (if the dear soul has any hates, even for the Saracens), so many limitations and inspirations to feeling and conduct, so many susceptibilities, for which he has no cause or reason whatever, and for which he can look for their source only in a previous incarnation. My Seer has passed that animal stage where thought is but the recurrence of fermentations of cellular conditions, evolving electrical currents in the billions of thought tracts with which a long excitation of sensory nerve action has criss-crossed the brain, as the scientific materialists would have it. He has spiritual insight; his meditations are those of concentrated intellections. His is not "the ecstatic stupor of the cow . . . chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies." He has come to himself and said, "I will go to my father," leaving

the "husks that the swine did eat"—to—to those who like them!

I can conceive how a person may attain a clear consciousness, a knowledge of former lives, not derivative from memory, but acquired by actual inspiration, which he may hesitate to assert. There are certain sacrednesses which the soul (as well as the heart) may not profane by speech. They belong to the experiences of that sixth sense my old friend talks of; are the revelations no man may utter; for words are but the angels of the soul and many of them are fallen. "See thou tell no man" was a prescription for healing of which Jesus knew the psychical efficacy—the failure to follow which is the origin of doubt and then relapse. Henry Ward Beecher once denounced as sacrilegious those familiar but good-meaning people who slap a person on the back and say, "How's your soul?"

You say you are afraid you would "lose identity when born again into a strange, new body." Have you lost it in your present body? Do you think you are *you* now? The physicists say that we renew our tissues, our bones even, every seven years. Don't

you think your ego rather comfortably feels itself to be itself now after, say, three such renewals? May I not venture to suppose that you vividly remember the personal events of your life, even some of your dreams, preceding all the three? But it is not upon that remembrance only that you base your identity; it is rather upon your knowledge of the continued sameness, of the unintermittent continuity of your Self. You may compare your states of mind and feeling now with those, let me suppose, of last September! But you will not, by the mere act of memory, assume to test your identity. That anything is or was does not depend on memory. That you remember now depends on your present ability to reproduce the sensation of—of—our parting! That sensation may not affect you now, except as a passing memory—a has-been.

You have spent one-fourth, at any rate, of your time in sleep; like that church at Sardis, you were living yet dead—asleep; yet your Thinker knows itself to be itself after forgetting itself for seven years of your present life. Why should you fear to prolong that sleep, or to go to sleep and, when you awake,

get into a new body as you shall deserve to choose; for it must be the logical conclusion of the Aged One's doctrine of cause and effect, the sowing and reaping, that you will get your deserts—with some of us, that's the rub!

The genealogy of sin as an infraction of moral or physical law, under the operation of the rule of cause and effect, embraces the past as well as the present life, as shown by the story of the "man blind from his birth," concerning whom the disciples of Jesus asked: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The Master answered: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be manifest in him." Thereupon He healed the man. But why the question? It must have been upon the presentation of the blind man as an object-lesson of a previous teaching by the Master, and was shown to be an exception proving the rule; the "sin" was an accidental sin, a prenatal mishap, for which neither the parents nor the blind man was morally responsible.

I fear you will have to be content to believe that each soul must come to have within itself the subconsciousness of previous existence,

because any extrinsic record of a previous life on earth after a thousand years or so of "heaven" can hardly be preserved, and memory of the sensations of any previous lives on earth will only have as their heirs by spiritual heredity the unconscious suggestions they have in the present life. To a soul in-born of the Spirit of Life there must come in some transcendent state of intellection a conscious continuity of individuality independent of the shell-body, which, as in the Hermit, knows itself to be itself—a child everlasting from its progenition, and not a gross phenomenon of matter.

Solely because a man-animal stands erect on his hind legs, and, reasoning upon his experiences, feeds, clothes, and shelters himself, he has not a continuing "soul to save," nor can he "call his soul his own" so as to be capable of living endlessly; but to become so he must involve the highest into his lower condition by reaching up and bringing down into himself the Spirit of Life. "All good gifts come from above." Evolution is a cry for help! Growth is the ability to *add* to one's self.

My old Philosopher and Friend does not ignore physical heredity in his exaltation and

prophecy of the everlastingness of the spiritual entity; for, upon my suggestion that his genealogy of the spirit or soul in man ought to have some correlation in man's material body, to keep pace with his spiritual uplift, he said: "These bodies of ours are instinct with the man-animal germ since his emergence. Each of the millions of cells in our flesh and bones has a history, and by specific functions of the brain carrying those sensations to the Thinker a character has been formed by that history. This character is transmitted and specialized from generation to generation, and each, in its degree, is intelligently related to others and becomes more complex as well as distinctive—a microcosm of all past experiences—just as the Thinker, the Psyche, has its past history and character; with the vital difference that Psyche has assumed control and wardship, and finally has outgrown the body."

I can readily trace your wheat-gold hair, born of the sun and snow, nurtured by the winds of northern seas, to Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and there is a heraldry can blazon your title to that remote Adam (or to those remoter Adamses) who first stood erect and

enforced service from all his congeners of the slime? But you are an heir, a progenition, a composite picture of all the lives of your fathers who have lived during all the years since. I am sure yours is a noble strain of Thinkers and Doers. Your Psyche! Alas, of what does it not assume wardship?

You know the story of Psyche—the story painted on the wall and ceiling of the Farnese Palace? It is of her triumph and translation to the home of the gods through the intervention of Cupid and her marriage to him. It is a personification of the soul perfected by love. Shall not Psyche, through love, create a new heaven and a new earth, and Man, immensely gianted, become the sum of all creatures? The conception of Christ as the Son-of-Man is a prodigious step toward the realization of that final consummation.

You “wish to know why man should not have been created a spiritual-soul in the first instance; why he was made ‘a little lower than the angels’ to begin with?” And you add: “If he had been made perfect in the beginning, it would have saved a world of trouble.” “Well,” as Dundreary says, “that is another of those things no fellow can find

out"—yet! Would you have him an angel? Beware of Lucifer! But you might ask why all flowers do not grow spontaneously in the air, or on your hat, and all of them your favorite roses!

"Why" is the word of curiosity, of progress, and in the long-run is answered; and that is what faith in God means—the assurance of the answer. The Life of the Universe is being lived; we can grow with it, or we can cumber the ground. You know the saying, "A letter unanswered answers itself." All letters are answered in the progress of that life.

The homely speech, "It will all come out in the washing," is but another expression of that common faith in the ultimate explanation—the cleansing from all doubt.

* * * * *

Faithfully yours,

CAPRI, Italy, *April 2, 190-*.

MY DEAR ———:

This afternoon I wandered up my accustomed route and had a séance with my Ancient of Days at his friendly door. All the

island is abloom, and was reflected in the cheeriness of him in whose veins the wine of life is renewed with the flowering spring. I do not wait for your reply to my last letter before giving you a new personal experience, and trying to answer how long a person's reincarnations were to be kept up "as a going concern," and what they have to do with the "spoilt child."

From what I can make out from the detached emanations, so to speak, of my old friend, rewards and punishments as we style them, cause and effect in his vocabulary, are meted out through reincarnations, and throughout them the human soul is ever helped toward perfection by the constant effluence of the Life of the Universe—the Spiritual Force of God. The survival of the fittest (the fightest, if you will) is but the selection by this Force of the means of progress. It is a good deal like the scholar working his way, by excelling in learning, to the head of his class with the aid of the teacher. The Soul continually grows into the sacred image of the Father—until it can say: "I and my Father are one," and then the cycle of life on earth is complete. As

belief in eternal life—a self-consciousness of it—is the muniment of an individual's title thereto, so disbelief is a negation, a dis-possession of it. Yet an individual, self-conscious of eternal life in himself, may seek reincarnation for the purgation of effects caused by his former lives. That is, an individual may be entitled to live everlastingly, but his happiness may require reincarnations to free himself from previous ill-doings—from the effect of “deeds done in the body,” for it is by good deeds that every man is to attain happiness. Reincarnation will cease when the soul is in perfect accord with the Life of the Universe—at one with God, and that at-oneness will be when it can be said of it as of one of old: “Enoch walked with God; and was not, for God took him.” Was not Jesus of Nazareth a Son of Man *become* a Son of God, an individual entity possessed of the quality of Everlasting Life, sinless as well, and, as such exalted personage, may He not, if He will, reincarnate in a human body as easily as He may dwell in the ether—in fine, may He not “come again”? General Lew Wallace would never consent to the dramatization of *Ben-Hur* for the stage until the

Nazarene should appear only as a light, in which the lepers were healed, exemplifying the scripture that "in Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

I asked the Hermit, "If the Kingdom of God is within us, and is a condition of the soul, will that condition involve any powers, as of healing, or of obtaining knowledge, illumination of the understanding?"

He answered: "To attain that condition the first thing is to obey the command, 'Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.' Then there comes an effluence from the source of all life which transfuses and enlightens the Soul. Why or how I do not know; I simply know it is so by being conscious of its inspiriting power, which each soul must 'feel to know.'"

"What is the effect upon one in his relation to his fellows?" I asked.

"Well, practically, it is a prompting to go about doing good."

"Then," I returned, "I suppose a man, so conditioned, lives by what he feeds on, as 'Every man is the son of his own works'; but has such a man any extraordinary, not to say supernatural or occult, power?"

“That is a matter you will know more of when you attain to it,” was his answer. But he resumed: “‘Eye hath not seen nor ear heard . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him’—and, my son, let me add, for them you love.”

I scarcely think his addenda was intended specifically for myself, but was applicable to one who should love his neighbor as himself; yet I doubt not that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things prepared for him *you* love. He is a very loving as well as lovely old man, and was quite rhapsodical when he continued: “Love is the universal harmony, the cohesive force of all matter, and in ‘the sweet influences of the Pleiades’ all the stars of heaven feel its centring force; and why should the Soul of man be ashamed to acknowledge and glory in this power to love which centres in the very God?”

“Then,” I added, “it is worth while to love even for love’s own sake.”

With a quizzical glance at me, he rejoined: “Yes, if it will keep you in Capri!”

I sat there beside him, warm in the sun-setting, for some time, thankful that the dear old man was in any wise pleased to have me

remain in the island, while the blithe air over blossoming vines brought up the perfume of the springtime from the underlying vineyards, until, turning to him, I found him with closed eyes, relaxed at ease in his arm-chair, lapsed into a state of dreaminess with a seeming consciousness that he was dreaming, to judge from the placid expression of his face. After a moment he awoke, to gaze at me with those illumining brown eyes as if to impart his dream; but with a smile of kindliness wrinkling up his eyes he only said: "I shall miss you."

I thanked him for his interest in me, and, as the sun hovered over Monte Solaro in the west, bade him "good-evening," but lightly called back, as I descended the chapel steps, "I haven't gone yet!"

I went down over the ruins some three hundred yards, and turned aside from the path once more to enjoy the extended view of the sea and island from the top of the old lighthouse perched on the cliff over the sea. Climbing up, I sat there some time, content to inhale the gracious air, and, relaxed into a brown-study, to follow the wake of the sun as it led westward toward home and you,

when I distinctly heard a clear, bell-like voice exclaiming: "Oh, my beloved, come!" It was an appealing, assertive voice. I heard it not from without or from a distance, but as an articulate speech in my inner ear—at the spot in the brain where we do hear.

Aroused, I wondered if my Seer was exercising one of his occult gifts on me; or was I becoming nervously excited by my night watches with him on the mountain, and my "subjective" was juggling with my "objective" in make-believes; or had I intercepted some wireless telegram designed for some wandering lover?—for the voice was melodious, of timbre feminine! Really, would it not be something dizzily occult if one could only "hear what is whispered in the King's bed-chamber"?

I proceeded homeward as far as the little church of San Michele, which stands at the north side of my way, near the town, and had sat down on the rude steps leading up from the road toward the church, when there came up along the steep ascent from the town my lady of the pillar in San Stefano, also of the Chapel steps and kodak—and, was it not, I wonder, of the cavern of the Castiglione!

How comely she was in her simple, gray dress of woollen, on her head the ever-worn Capri scarf of varied and bright hue, and on her feet the white cotton shoes with soles of hempen cord which cling to the rocky paths! As she approached with hesitating pause of recognition and inquiry, I rose with hat raised in respectful salute, to which she, in the musical Italian aspirate, "Il Signor!" responded, with a gentle inclination of her head, while her dark eyes, timorously confident of friendliness, held my salutation in privilege, as she stood with questioning lips apart. She, evidently, had not halted in dalliance or without the authority of purpose. Now that she was near, facing me, I could see where the Greek had left his modelled grace of form and strength of profile to wander down the years. A fine sensibility played about the corners of her mouth and eyes, the former responsive to the latter. Impersonality was in the atmosphere of her, yet with a pervading individuality giving strength and purpose, as if she put aside herself in the thought which preoccupied her or the message she had in charge. I stood thus, hat in hand, not a little in awe, before this admirable

epitome of historic Capri, and was at a loss to imagine why so evidently she should wish to interview me. While the faintest blush hovered about her temples below her gray-black hair, she began:

"You have been with our friend, the Hermit?"

She laid no emphasis on the "our," nor did she consciously use it as a confidence between us, but it was as a relation granted as of course, an indefinite adjective.

"Oh yes, I left him not a quarter of an hour ago. The descent is rapid," I answered.

She continued: "Are you going away?"

"Away? From Capri, do you mean? No."

"I was told to meet you as you came down the way, and, if I could, ask you."

Surprised, I interrupted with: "You were told to ask me! Who is so interested? May I be curious enough to inquire who told you to question me?"

She smiled, and, with a lighting eye, answered: "*He* did."

"When?"

"Within the hour."

"Where?"

"While I was at my home in the town. He

told me to meet you here and ask. Shall I tell him you say, 'No'?"

"Certainly, if you are going up to Villa Jovis, and will be so kind—"

"But I do not have to go up to tell him," she broke in.

Amazed, I stammered: "You—you do not have to go up to see him to—to tell him!"

"No. Don't you know?"

"Yes, I begin to understand. It is one of those things that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, prepared for—for them that—'"

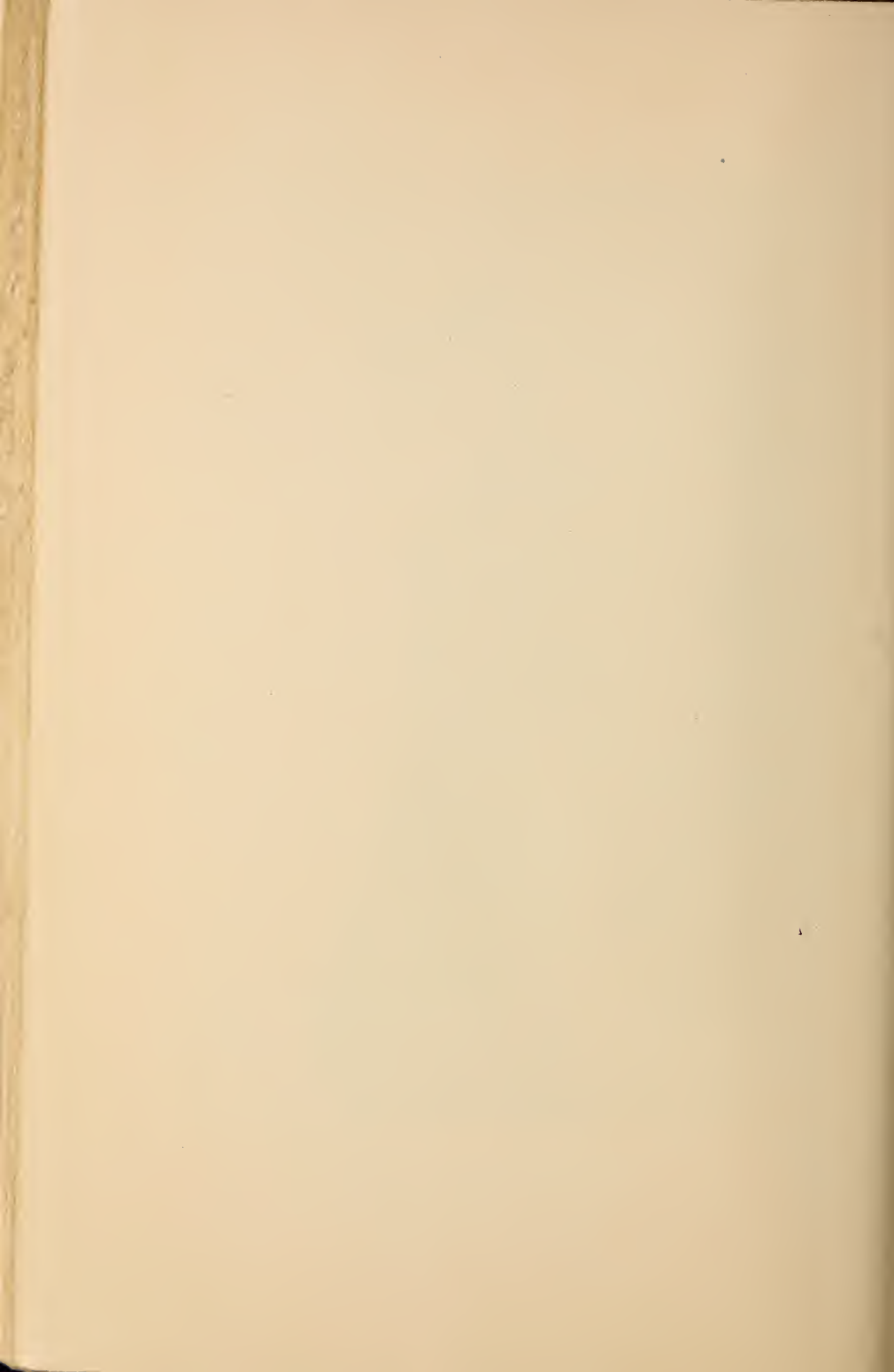
"Yes! yes!" With radiant face, she interrupted me. "He has been telling you."

And, giving me a parting smile and bow, with springing step she passed on over the stone-paved way, and was at once lost to my sight in its near windings.

Thereupon, directly, I began the steep descent from the little church, and in a five minutes of slipping and sliding down the pitching grade of the stone pavement entered one of those long arcades between the houses of the town where, on either side, shops and children do most abound, and soon was at my hotel. Heigho! Capri is not "so far away," after all.



"GOOD - BYE, CAPRI!"



I hope soon to unravel the knitting for your
entertainment. Meanwhile I remain, as ever,
Faithfully yours,

———, U. S. A., *April 2*, 190—.

MY DEAR ———:

“*You* may fill the blank.” It is already
full in my heart.

This is the first day of our spring vacation,
and it brought with it your dear letter of
March 20th, while a few friends were with
me at noon luncheon. The girls have just
gone, and I have fled to my room, and in
tears have read your every word.

Yes, indeed, I *do* remember the “good
times

“‘O’ Life! we’ve had long together.’”

And now, dear, I do not want to do *anything*
in the world without *you*! I have suffered
until I can endure it no longer. Every letter
you have written has been to me a reproach
as well as a gladness. The world has seemed

to be gliding from under me ever since you went away. I had lost gravity.

Some time ago, in one of your letters, you asked what was my "bitter disappointment," and I was not brave enough to tell you.

You know, you and I always have been loyal comrades; and, unconsciously, or, as you metaphysicians say, "subjectively," I always must have felt that oneness of thought and sympathy with you which, ever since your departure "for rest from worrisome work," as you gayly put it, has come home to me as a possible loss most unbearable until I have become jealous of your Hermit even.

Sincerity is evidenced by confession, and that is repentance. You alone can give me absolution.

"Mr. Call," as you have been pleased to name him, caught my fancy as something new. He was evidently in earnest in his court, and I believed him—one of the "some I have believed." Yet when he made his avowal, a few days before you left for Europe, I found, to my surprise, *I did not love him!* I had fancied I did, and, frankly, this discovery that I did not was a "bitter disappointment"; for I was so fascinated with the

idea of being "in love" that when he "proposed" I was dumfounded to find suddenly arise in me a deadly repulsion for him. A sudden realization of what true-love was took possession of me. He was an unknown quantity, an X, and I was no Y, and we could not equal anything. Not that there was any known objection to him! But an utter repulsion seized me. It was as if he, a stranger, had attacked me. I hated him abhorrently; partly, I suppose, because I so hated myself for my total lack of self-knowledge. I did, in truth, all the while, love. My love was so perfect and it so rounded my days with such peaceful assurance that, without asking myself why, I found that I had treasured, not only your every word and look, but, with the tenderest care, as a matter of course, had preserved every transient note, flower, book, picture, and all that, which you had given me in the gayety and frank cordiality of our comradeship. But this episode brought me to my senses. Oh, the pang of it when we parted in the sunshine at the gate! I had sinned against you—and myself. The Spirit of Love, grieved, was about to take its flight with *you*.

As we stood there in the glow of the parting day I felt the sun going down on my sin, and was speechless with the shame of it, knowing that you thought me disloyal to our unspoken past; yet you must have felt the truth! I *know* you did! I could not forgive myself enough to be frank with you—that was *the* “bitter disappointment,” indeed.

You would have pitied and forgiven me if you had known why, as you say, I turned from you and walked away so straight, without looking back, after asking you to write that I might know you were “all right.” Lot’s wife saved me!

Now, dear, is it “all a puzzle”? Does anybody “trouble” you? Now! *won’t* you “speak for yourself, John”? Dearest, with all my love, I send you many messages from my strong and constant heart.

Oh, my beloved, come!—when you will.

Auf Wiedersehen.

Faithfully yours,

THE END



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